CARNAVAL, *CARNY*, AND CARTOONS:

CARL STALLING'S CARTOON MUSIC

IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

by

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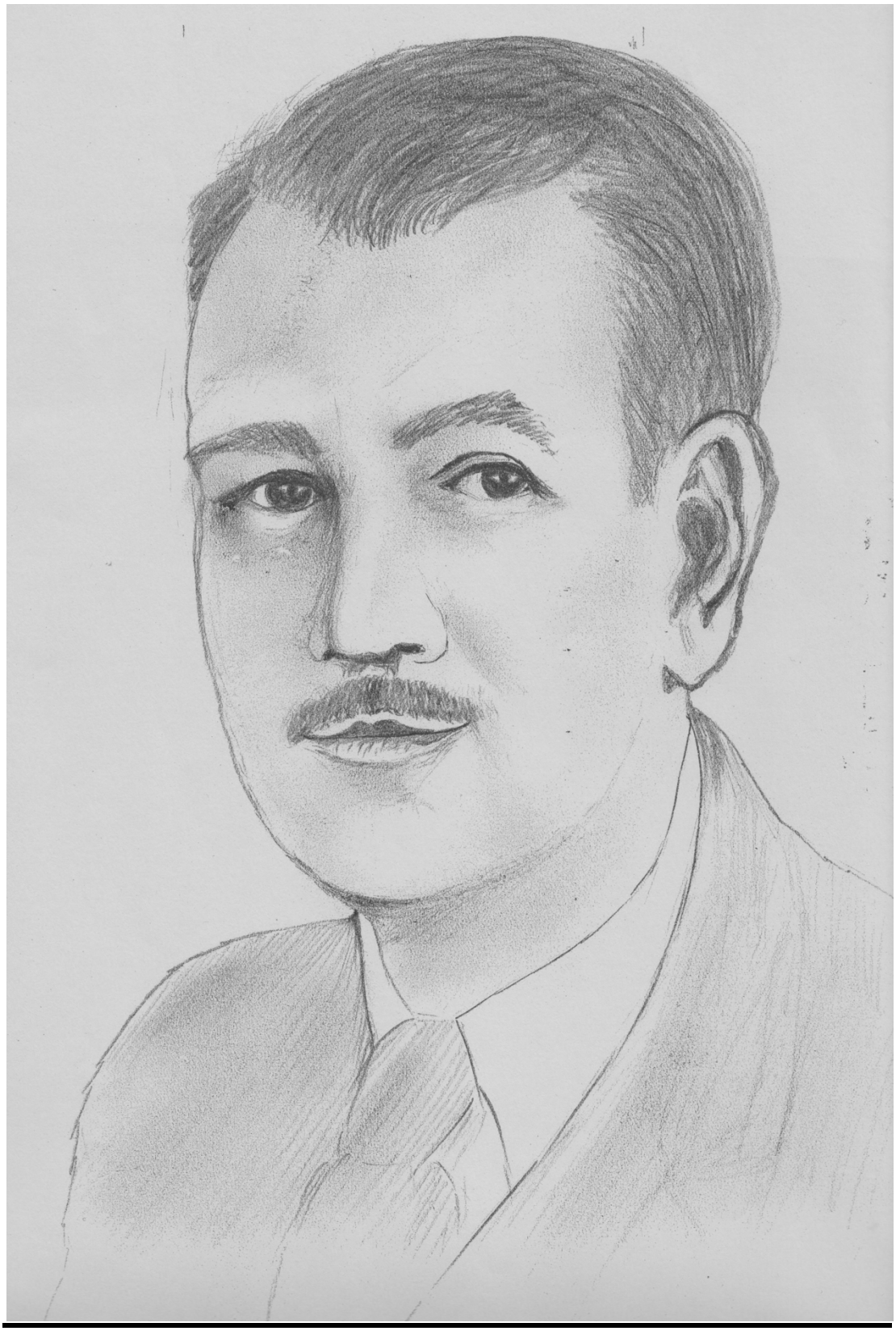

Self portrait of Carl Stalling (courtesy of The University of Wyoming).

CARNAVAL, *CARNY*, AND CARTOONS:
Carl Stalling's Cartoon Music in Historical Context

The animated shorts produced by Warner Bros. Studios from the 1930s through the 1950s—which partially consist of the "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" series—are responsible for the creation of such iconic characters as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig, and Yosemite Sam. While most Americans are probably familiar with these characters, few would likely be able to name the man responsible for breathing musical life into their on-screen actions. Composers who write music for popular cartoons, sitcoms, or comedic films aren't often celebrated for their work, so why should Carl Stalling and his cartoon music be regarded as exceptional? Through the course of this paper, I intend to answer this question by examining Stalling's music alongside great works of musical high art—from composers past and present—and by recognizing his compositional innovations in a historical context.

In Chapter 1, I introduce the reader to Stalling and the basic characteristics of his music. Following this introductory material, Chapter 2 deals exclusively with information regarding Stalling's musical education. This chapter is split into two parts: the first detailing his formal education at the Kansas City Conservatory, and the second, his informal education as an accompanist for silent films. The purpose of this chapter will be to show that both sides of his education were vitally important to the genesis of his simultaneously traditional (theater tradition) and rebellious (vis-a-vis conservatory tradition) compositional style.

Chapter 3 provides a look into the historical roots of silent film accompaniment by going back to 18th- and 19th-century theater practices. I present brief overviews of

vaudeville, burlesque, comic operetta, melodrama, and the minstrel show in order to establish Stalling's incidental connection to these historical models.

Chapter 4 is one of the analytical pillars of this study. This chapter juxtaposes Stalling's music with the early piano cycles of Robert Schumann. A close look at Schumann's *Carnaval*, op. 9 and *Papillons*, op. 2 shows how these pieces act as 19th-century precedent for many of Stalling's structural and musical practices. This chapter does not argue that Schumann's music acted as a direct influence on Stalling (nor does it reject the possibility), rather, it points to a similar musical and narrative approach embraced by both composers, demonstrating the artistic merit of Stalling's compositional techniques opposite one of the great, canonical composers of music history.

The final chapter (Chapter 5) is the other major pillar of this paper. It makes a similar comparison between composers—this time between Stalling and John Zorn (b. 1953). This chapter begins with a brief discussion on innovation birthed in the cocoon of artistic isolation. I point to similar innovations made by Stalling and composer Charles Ives—within their respective professional cocoons—that anticipated and even helped initiate early postmodern breaks from tradition. Following a brief pause in order to better understand "postmodernism," this chapter highlights Stalling's direct influences on John Zorn and postmodernism through a partial analysis of Zorn's piano piece, *Carny*. It frames Stalling as a true innovator and as one of the first composers to fully embrace a postmodern musical aesthetic.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Carl Stalling and His Music

Kitsch vs. Art

While flipping through television stations, it is easy to happen upon any one of the multiple stations now dedicated to broadcasting nothing but cartoons on a twenty-four-hour cycle. When I stop on one of these stations, I often see hurriedly produced animation, insultingly dim-witted dialogue, and some of the most terribly written music to be found anywhere on TV. It seems likely these cartoons have been thrown together solely to supply stressed-out parents with mind-numbing babysitters for children willing to sit and watch anything with moving colors. On particularly lucky days, however, I might accidentally stumble upon something truly worthwhile—something that takes me back to an eager anticipation of Saturday mornings and sugar cereal, to pajama-clad laughter and the sound of *Merry Go Round Broke Down*.[1] I might happen upon one of the many hundreds of animated shorts produced by Warner Bros. Studios between the 1930s and the 1950s. That these historical gems are so often lumped alongside their kitschy, cartoon-babysitter counterparts is to me a real tragedy. The tragedy lies not in the act of airing these shorts almost exclusively on children's networks with patchy standards of quality but in the implications this has on a body of shorts whose film-studio production value and attention to detail are deserving of more respect.

But where does one draw the line? At what point does a cartoon emerge from its kitsch-heavy medium and break into the nebulous world of "art"? While it is difficult to

[1] (The iconic "Looney Tunes" theme song, written by Cliff Friend and Dave Franklin)

find a perfect answer to this question, careful, quality craftsmanship is often a telltale sign of something that has managed to transcend kitschy stereotypes and embrace an artistic standard. It is due to this quality craftsmanship that the years roughly spanning 1928-1960 are often referred to as the "golden age" of Hollywood cartoons. Disney, Warner Bros., and MGM produced this brand of craftsmanship on a consistent basis, but they were by no means the only studios turning out top-notch work during these decades. This was a time before syndicated television reruns when animated shorts were played in theaters before feature films. It was a time when cartoon audiences consisted of people of all ages who expected to get their money's worth at the box office, a time when animation departments received healthy funding from big-studio executive offices, a time when viewing colorful images on-screen was still new and exciting. A wealth of angles regarding the quality of the cartoons being produced during these golden years is available for examination by scholars, but this paper is concerned with only one: the cartoon music composed by Carl Stalling between 1928 and 1958. This paper is an examination of how Stalling's music and compositional style transcended the stereotypes of kitsch so commonly associated with cartoon music, crossing the threshold into a world of valued musical art.

A Brief Overview of Available Materials

Before I begin with the meat of this paper, it is essential for me to explain that I intend to partially fill a noticeable void in the body of extant research materials available on Carl Stalling. Thanks to the foundational work done by Daniel Goldmark, this void is considerably less gaping than it was before the completion of his 2001 dissertation and

subsequent book, *Tunes For 'Toons*. These materials will without a doubt continue to form the groundwork for future Stalling research for a long time to come. This paper in no way attempts to assume a similar role and instead exists in order to build upon Goldmark's expansive foundation in a more specific way. This is not a biography on Stalling, it does not discuss the technical processes of cartoon music making or animation, and it most certainly is not a study on Hollywood cartoon music in general. For those who wish to gain a more complete knowledge of these things, I point the reader to Goldmark's research, which shines in those areas. This paper deals exclusively with Stalling's music as it relates to historical precedent and as it inspires 20th-century postmodernism, both of which are angles that have yet to be examined in any extensive way. Of necessity, there may be small amounts of informational overlap between my work and Goldmark's, but where such overlap exists, it is in the name of a different overall objective.

As for Stalling-related materials not written by Goldmark, very little exists. The bulk of this limited material consists of one additional dissertation (Guzzo's), a few books about Hollywood cartoons in general that include minimal information about Stalling, myriad articles,[2] one interview, and the scores and other personal materials of Stalling's that are found in the archives of the University of Wyoming and the University of Southern California. This paltry list of materials should be viewed as unacceptable considering the quality of Stalling's music and the array of opportunities it offers for worthy academic research.

[2] Goldmark and Taylor have compiled many of these into *The Cartoon Music Book*.

A Concise Summary of Stalling's Career[3]

Carl Stalling (1891-1972) is responsible for composing the music to over 700 cartoon shorts over the span of his career.[4] In 1928, during his time working in Kansas City as an organist and conductor in silent film theaters, Stalling became acquainted with Walt Disney, who began his animation career in Missouri. Disney persuaded him to move to Hollywood and write music for what history recognizes as the ground floor of sound cartoons. Stalling wrote the scores for nineteen of Disney's first twenty sound cartoons (excluding *Steam Boat Willie*, 1928).[5] Most of these were early Mickey Mouse cartoons, but Stalling was also instrumental in the birth of Disney's *Silly Symphonies* series, as he composed the music for the first five of those gems. Due to a combination of internal conflict within the Disney camp and more lucrative offers elsewhere, Stalling left Disney in January of 1930 for a brief stint at Van Beuren studios, where he claimed he never worked on a single cartoon.[6] From there, Stalling worked at the studio of his good friend, Ub Iwerks (another former Disney employee) for six months before leaving in 1932 to freelance for about a year. In 1933, Stalling resumed his services at Iwerks until it went out of business in 1936, at which point he was hired almost immediately by Warner Bros.[7] Stalling composed for Warner Bros. from 1936 until the end of his career in 1958.

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[3] This is covered quite well by Goldmark, so this section will remain brief.
[4] This figure derives from the Internet Movie Database: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0006298/
[5] Daniel Goldmark, and Yuval Taylor, eds. *The Cartoon Music Book* (Chicago, IL: A Capella Books, 2002), 58-59.
[6] Goldmark and Taylor, 46
[7] Daniel Goldmark, *Tunes for 'Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 12-13.

The Basics of Stalling's Style

Stalling's music can be broken into five key compositional elements that have a presence in almost every short he composed for (this represents a very general, non-exhaustive list). The five elements are as follows:

1. Original music
2. Mickey-mousing
3. Quotation and parody
4. Layers of comedy and meaning below the surface
5. Jump-cut juxtapositions and successive blocks of sound

Stalling was once quoted as saying that "eighty to ninety percent" of the music he composed was original music.[8] This may be somewhat surprising to some people, considering Stalling's undeserved reputation for being a mere compiler of pre-existing music rather than a composer. Chuck Jones (a colleague of Stalling's and one of the most notable cartoon directors at Warner Bros.) even claimed that "Stalling was good at writing his own music, but he seldom did."[9] Simply put, this is not true. While Stalling's estimation may be high, there is no doubt that the most important element of his music is original material. Even his most quotation-heavy cue sheets[10] rarely make up more than half of any given short. In fact, as he neared the end of his career, his cue sheets often included only a few solitary titles of quoted material. A simple way of finding the general ratio of quoted material to original music in Stalling's scores is by taking his most

[8] Goldmark and Taylor, 50
[9] Goldmark, 11
[10] A cue sheet is a list of the musical materials used in a particular short. These lists would include the titles of the musical sources being quoted, the composer, and the duration for which it was quoted. Some of Stalling's original music was listed on these cue sheets as well.

quotation-heavy score (*The Isle of Pingo-Pongo*, 1938[11]) and the score including the largest percentage of original music (*Guided Muscle*, 1955[12]) and finding the median between the two. In doing so, I estimate the actual ratio to be roughly 60/40—60% original music and 40% borrowed material.

Much of Stalling's original music consisted of a technique known as "mickey-mousing." Mickey-mousing can best be described as "sonic descriptions of visual events."[13] This occurs when the music acts as a direct reflection of the on-screen action, mirroring the visual story through a simultaneous musical narrative. Mickey-mousing is essentially music in its most action-descriptive state (a partial analysis of a section of mickey-mousing appears in Chapter 4). A quick example of this technique would be the use of pizzicato strings when a character is taking light, hurried steps, or quickly descending chromatic scales if a character is falling off a cliff, or perhaps slowly scooping violins when a character is raising its eyebrows. There are any number of ways in which mickey-mousing can be employed, and Stalling was an absolute master of it. This technique has played a huge role in cartoon music from Carl Stalling to the present day, and as Stalling was a part of sound cartoons from the beginning, he was one of the very first to explore its vast narrative possibilities. While not all of Stalling's original music was written in this way, it is one of the most noticeable characteristics of his work. John Zorn put it perfectly when he said:

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[11] The thirty-nine quotations in this short equal roughly 5:42 of the 7:00 short.
[12] The single quotation in this short (played during the opening credits) equals 0:13 of the 7:00 short. This extremely heavy reliance on original music is quite common in Road Runner shorts from the late 1950s.
[13] John Zorn, liner notes for *The Carl Stalling Project: Music from Warner Bros. Cartoons 1936-1958*, by Carl Stalling, Warner Bros. Records 9 26027-2, 1990, One compact disk.

> Directors thought the great thing Stalling did was to arrange Tchaikovsky. Not at all. What was great was his "mickey mousing," which functioned as the meat of the composition. This is still shockingly original.[14]

Another major characteristic of Stalling's music is his use of quotation (this is also dealt with fairly extensively in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Stalling infused his music with quotations from pre-existing compositions and familiar tunes as a way of helping him reach his comedic objectives. His most common approach to employing this technique was by finding ways that the music could achieve dual meaning. This was often done by either using cues with titles or lyrics that created a measure of irony vis-a-vis the on-screen action or cues with titles and lyrics that complemented the action. The most commonly given example of this technique is Stalling's use of the song *Lady in Red* to accompany Bugs Bunny dressed in drag. This, however, was not the only way Stalling would quote pre-existing material. Sometimes he would use emotionally identifiable classical pieces that immediately evoke some particular mood or emotion. This was usually the case when Stalling quoted the villainous sounding *Der Erlkönig*, by Schubert, accompanied a chase with Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, or used an overture from one of Wagner's operas to add a sense of drama or suspense.

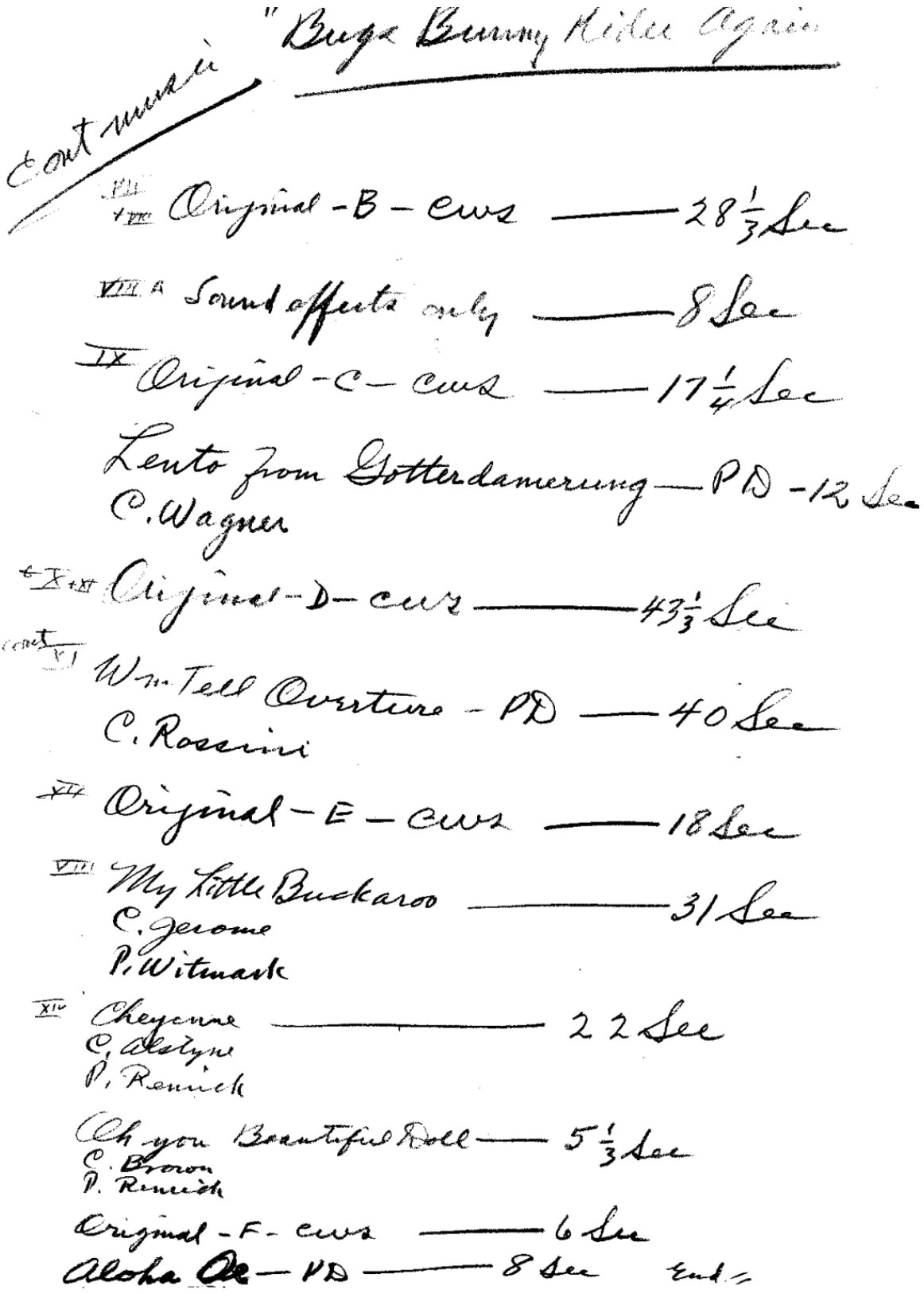
It has been argued that, since Stalling was responsible for composing a new score almost every week, his heavy use of quotation may actually have stemmed from a desire to save time.[15] While this may be a legitimate argument, it seems improbable to suggest that Stalling could not have written an entire score of original music every week had he wanted to. As I have just shown, there were certainly times during his career when he did just that. Additionally, considering the way he so uniquely altered the quotations from

[14] Goldmark and Taylor, 264
[15] Goldmark, 22

their original states, these arrangements would very likely have taken an amount of creative energy comparable to that of adding a little extra original music or mickey-mousing.

The final characteristic of Stalling's style is his love of juxtaposition between dramatically contrasting musics, dynamics, emotions, and textures. He had no qualms about jumping from a quotation of Raymond Scott's *Dinner Music for a Hungry Pack of Cannibals* to a few seconds of *Rock-a-Bye Baby*, to a brief episode of mickey-mousing, then a few notes of *Home Sweet Home*, a bit of original music, and finally the *Grand Galop Chromatique*, by Franz Liszt, for good measure (as is the case in *Homeless Hare*, 1950). All one has to do is take a look at almost any of Stalling's cue sheets to see that he most definitely had a very eclectic taste in music and he was open to throwing almost anything into the musical stew **(see Fig. 1)**. Once it was all in the pot (including his own material), the process of jump-cutting and extreme contrast between disparate blocks of musical sound could begin. This juxtaposition can be seen in almost all aspects of his music—including the mickey-mousing—and it became something of a musical trademark for Stalling.

Fig. 1. A page from Stalling's cue sheet to *Bugs Bunny Rides Again* (1948), Courtesy of The University of Wyoming.



Chapter 2

Stalling's Musical Education

One of the areas of particular significance to the objectives of this paper is Carl Stalling's musical education. His education can be separated into two categories: the first being his formal education, and the second, his informal education. The umbrella of formal education, as I differentiate it, includes everything from private lessons with piano and organ teachers to conventional conservatory learning. Stalling's informal education consisted mainly of what he learned by working in silent film theaters as well as in amassing a wide array of musical materials from which to draw as a composer. I aim to show that both aspects of his education were distinctively important to his musical development, and that his cartoon music materialized out of influences from the formal as well as the informal.

Formal Education

Not much has been said or written about Stalling's formal musical education. It is difficult to know exactly what his earliest training consisted of, and no record remains naming his childhood teacher (or teachers). We do know, however, that Stalling began studying piano at the age of six with a private teacher.

> I had a private teacher; I started when I was six years old. My dad was a carpenter, and he found a broken toy piano. It was all broken to pieces and had little metal keys, like xylophone keys. One of them was missing, so he had to make one himself. He gave me a little frame box, and put the keys on that, and made some little hammers, and I started picking out tunes on that. That's how they started me studying piano. . . . I couldn't reach the pedal when I started

> playing; somebody had to pedal for me. I couldn't do the pedaling on the old church organs, either. I started playing them when I was eight or ten years old.[16]

Whomever this teacher (or teachers) may have been, it is probable that his early lessons would have consisted partially of Friedrich Burgmüller's *Twenty Five Easy and Progressive Studies for Pianoforte*, op. 100 and possibly J.B. Cramer's *Fifty Selected Pianoforte Studies*. Stalling's personal music library[17] includes these two scores, which date back as early as the last decade of the nineteenth century.[18] These scores contain markings, doodles, and other notes written in what appears to be the childhood hand of Stalling.[19] From this, it can be gleaned that he would have had a fairly solid early background of basic piano technique before the age of thirteen, when he began working as a theater pianist in Lexington, Missouri. Moreover, it is highly probable that a teacher who would assign Burgmüller and Cramer to a student would also have had that student working on other simple pieces by classical composers. Certainly, Stalling's library consists of many classical pieces that could have been handled by a beginner or intermediate pianist. While many of these scores also contain Stalling's handwriting, it is a bit more difficult to pinpoint a general time frame for when they may have been used by him. We do know, however, that Stalling moved to the Kansas City area and began

[16] Goldmark and Taylor, 55

[17] This collection, which I examined personally, was donated to the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming after Stalling's death.

[18] Stalling's Burgmüller score is copyrighted 1893.

[19] Stalling's handwriting contained a few distinct characteristics from his early childhood to the end of his life. Most notable of these characteristics is the unique curvature at the top of his letter "C." The markings found in these scores clearly suggest an early childhood version of Stalling's handwriting.

studying piano at the Kansas City Conservatory of Music under Moissaye Boguslawski sometime in 1910 or shortly before.[20]

Boguslawski was a Chicago native of Russian decent whose principal piano teacher as a young man had been Rudolf Ganz, a pupil of the famed Ferruccio Busoni.[21] At the age of twenty, Boguslawski got the job as head of the piano department at the Kansas City Conservatory. It was from there that he began making a name for himself as a serious concert pianist and pedagogue. He played concerts throughout the United States (including at least one in Carnegie Hall), and his performances received fine reviews from a number of critics.[22] Boguslawski even turned down a personal offer from Busoni to study with him in Europe, deciding instead to stay in Kansas City at the Conservatory.[23]

We know that Stalling studied under Boguslawski from information found in a short article from 1948 on Stalling's career, which identifies Stalling as a source.[24] While no specific details survive concerning the working relationship between young Stalling and his teacher, there are a few important things that can be gleaned by understanding

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[20] The 1910 U.S. Census places an eighteen-year-old Stalling with his family in Jackson County, MO, and Stalling claims to have been working in Independence during that year.
[21] Allan Harding, "This Boy had the Will to Conquer," *The American Magazine* (May 1923), Reprinted by Nettheim (Sept 2004). http://nettheim.com/boguslawski/index.html.
[22] *The New York Times,* November 14, 1917: "Moses Boguslawski, a young pianist who made a promising first appearance in New York last season, played again yesterday in Aeolian Hall. His program was not of the usual sort; it began with Weber's A flat sonata; Schumann's "Scenes from Childhood"; six of Paganini's caprices arranged by Liszt, and pieces by Rubinstein, Howard Brockway, Schubert and Gabrilowitsch. Mr. Boguslawski played sincerely, brilliantly, and with taste and musical feeling. His technical equipment carried him safely through many difficulties."
[23] Harding, par. 60
[24] Goldmark, 165-66

what kind of man and teacher Boguslawski was. Of his outlook on teaching, Boguslawski explained:

> Every new pupil is just one more opportunity for me to enrich people's lives. For that is what an appreciation of good music does; and if the student gains nothing else from his study, he does gain this appreciation. . . . If you ask me what is the one thing I look for in a pupil, the one sign that tells me the boy or the girl will achieve something worth-while I can answer you immediately: It is the *will*. I would rather have a pupil with just an average degree of talent, but with a supreme and unshakable will to conquer by hard work than to have a brilliant, but careless and indolent genius.[25]

From this, we we can derive two key things about Stalling's musical education. The first is that Boguslawski's primary objective as a teacher was to give his students an appreciation for "good music"—which, considering his own musical training, his relatively traditional performing career, and what we know of the repertoire he programmed obviously refers to first-rate classical music. Given this objective, it can be assumed that Stalling's studies with his teacher would have consisted heavily of music by canonical classical composers. Secondly, Boguslawski's emphasis on hard work most likely means that he would have expected young Stalling to dedicate a great deal of time honing his skills at the piano through this "good music."

The above article also lists Pietro Yon as Stalling's former organ teacher. Yon was an organist and composer from Italy, who moved to the United States in 1907.[26] He had previously held the position of deputy organist at the Vatican before settling in New York as organist of the church of St. Francis Xavier and eventually as an organist at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

[25] Harding, par. 63 and 69
[26] *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Yon, Pietro Alessandro," by Vernon Gotwals.

Stalling's library of musical scores also offers a few clues into when this tutelage may have taken place. There are several published organ pieces composed by Yon in Stalling's collection. Some of these scores contain markings, not in Stalling's hand, that appear to be those of a teacher for a student. If these are indeed Yon's markings, this would place their relationship sometime after 1917, which is the copyright year of the organ music by Yon found in Stalling's library. That being said, as Yon resided in New York from 1907 until his death in 1943, there are only two likely scenarios in which these two men could have worked together. The first option is that Yon, who concertized regularly, could have come to the Kansas City area intermittently for performances, and Stalling could have received lessons from him during these periods. The other possible scenario is that this relationship occurred later on in Stalling's life, around 1932, when Stalling was doing freelance work for Disney in New York City, where Yon taught. Regardless of when or how often he was able to study with Yon, his instruction from this highly reputable organist/composer appears to have influenced Stalling a great deal and been a source of pride for him throughout his life, as Yon's tutelage is even mentioned in Stalling's 1972 obituary.

Probably the most vivid look into Stalling's musical education comes from the annual catalogues distributed by the Kansas City Conservatory of Music in the early twentieth century. In looking at the "Fourth Annual Catalogue" (1910-11) and the "Sixth Annual Catalogue" (1912-13), one can understand what would have been required of piano students at the conservatory during years that Stalling would almost assuredly have been studying there.

Stalling's obituary states that he graduated from the Kansas City Conservatory, and an article of 1940—which again identifies Stalling as a source—shows evidence that he may actually have taught piano there for a time.[27] These two morsels of information allow us to get a very specific glimpse into what his education would have consisted of. In the "Fourth Annual Catalogue," under the section titled "Course of Study: Piano Department: Requirements for Teachers' Certificate," we find the following stated guidelines:

> Candidate must have studied, and must play satisfactorily in examination before the Faculty, a Bach Invention and Prelude and Fugue, representative compositions by Schumann, Schubert, and Chopin; and must also present a piano concerto.
>
> Must have completed at least one year of Harmony.
> Must attend lectures and pass examination in History of Music.[28]

And in the "Requirements for Graduation" section, we read:

> Candidate must be able to present a recital program, comprising of compositions of the Classic and Romantic School; also is obliged to play a concerto[29] before the Board of Musical Directors; must have completed two years of Harmony.[30]

The "Sixth Annual Catalogue"[31] offers an even more in-depth look into The Kansas City Conservatory of Music's requirements. The requisites during this year were separated into six grades, with the music covered in each grade becoming progressively more challenging **(see Fig. 2)**. The music included in the sixth grade was reserved for those

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[27] Goldmark, 165: "Right from the beginning Carl started teething on a tuning fork, and at the ripe age of fourteen, he was playing piano for the picture shows, and later teaching piano in the Conservatory."
[28] "Fourth Annual Catalogue of the Kansas City Conservatory of Music," 1910-11, University of Missouri-Kansas City Library.
[29] There is a copy of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor in Stalling's library with quite a few personal markings in the music. It appears as though this was a piece he worked on at some point in his life.
[30] ibid.
[31] "Sixth Annual Catalogue of the Kansas City Conservatory of Music," 1912-13, University of Missouri-Kansas City Library.

Fig. 2. Piano Requirements from the Sixth Annual Catalogue, 1912-13 (courtesy of The University of Missouri).

Courses of Study

PIANO DEPARTMENT.

First Grade Work.

(a) Gustav Damm.
All Sharp Scales.
All Flat Scales.
(b) Gurlitt, Op. 130.
35 Easy Studies.
Lecouppey, Op. 17.
25 Easy Studies.

Second Grade Work.

(a) Loeschorn, Op. 84.
60 Practice Pieces.
Bertini, Op. 100.
25 Studies without Octaves.
Burgmuller, Op. 100.
25 Studies for Small Hands.
(b) Gurlitt, Op. 107.
"Buds and Blossoms."
Loeschorn, Op. 52.
30 Melodious Studies.
Loeschorn, Op. 66.
Studies.
Heller, Studies.

Third Grade Work.

(a) Phillip, Exercises for the Development of the Fingers.
Loeschorn, Op. 136, Studies.
Lecouppey, Op. 26, Studies.
Czerny, Op. 299, Studies.
Bach-Busoni, Two-part Inventions.
Scales in thirds and sixths in major and minor.
(b) Czerny, Op. 335, Legato and Staccato.
Lecouppey, Op. 20, Progressive Studies.
Heller, Op. 45, Studies.
Heller, Op. 46, Studies.
(c) Jensen, Op. 32, Studies.
Haberbier, Op. 53, Etudes.
Cramer, Studies.
Review of Bach-Busoni.
Two-part Inventions.

Fourth Grade Work.

(a) Clementi, Gradus ad Parnassum (first half).
Bach-Busoni, Three-part Inventions.
Kullak's Octave Studies.
Daily Technical Studies.
Henselt, Etudes.
Scales, third, sixth, tenth, dominant and diminished seventh chords.
Easier Pieces of Chopin,
Grieg,
Schubert,
Mozart.
Song without Words, Mendelssohn
(b) Beethoven, Sonata.
Schumann, Novelette.
Schubert, Impromptu.
Gnomenreigen, Liszt.
Review of Three-part Inventions
Elementary Harmony.

Fifth Grade Work.

(a) Bach, English Suites.
Chopin, Etudes,
Scherzo,
Waltzes,
Mazurkas.
Schubert, Sonata.
Schumann, Abegg Variations.
Clementi, Gradus ad Parnassum (second half).
(b) Bach-Busoni.
Well-tempered Clavichord, first and second parts and review of same.
Tausig, Daily Studies.
Liszt, 8th, 10th, 13th Rhapsodies.

Sixth Grade and Soloist's Course.

(a) Concerto.
Beethoven, Sonatas.
Liszt, Etudes.
Brahms, Piano Pieces.
Debussy, Piano Pieces.
Scales in double thirds, sixths, and octaves.
(b) Advanced Harmony.
(c) Must play from memory some Bach-Busoni Preludes and Fugues.
Bach-Liszt, Fugue in G minor.
Joseffy, Advanced Piano Technic.
Beethoven, E flat major Concerto.
Brahms, Variations on a Hungarian Song.
Modern Compositions.
Ensemble Playing.
Must present recital programs.
Musical Form, Counterpoint, etc.

students pursuing a degree as a solo pianist. While not impossible, this is most likely not the degree that Stalling would have attained. Considering the 1940 article's reference to his teaching at the Conservatory, it is much more likely that he would have received one of the two teaching degrees that were labeled in the "Sixth Annual Catalogue" as "Teacher's Certificate," and "Teacher's Diploma." The guidelines for the "Teacher's Certificate" were as follows:

> Major and minor scales, eighths, thirds, tenths, sixths. Contrary and parallel Motion. Major and minor tonic chord arpeggios. Dominant seventh chord. Diminished seventh chord. Well-tempered Clavichord, first and second parts. Two terms Cramer. Two terms Gradus. Four terms Harmony. Four terms Theory. Lectures in Musical History. Able to execute music of the fifth grade of the Kansas City Conservatory Course. Two years' study at the Conservatory.[32]

The guidelines for "Teacher's Diploma" included:

> Scales major and minor. Eighths, thirds, tenths, sixths, double thirds, double sixths, and octaves. Dominant seventh and diminished seventh. Bach, Well-tempered Clavichord, entire. Clementi, Gradus, second half. All requirements of fourth and fifth grade work of the Kansas City Conservatory Course. Eight terms Harmony. Four terms Theory, including study of musical forms, musical history, lectures. One term in practical method of teaching. Three years' study at the Conservatory.[33]

From this material, we can see that Carl Stalling must have had a very solid musical education, almost certainly including a heavy load of difficult piano repertoire standards, music theory, music history, harmony and counterpoint, and possibly even chamber music. His conservatory studies combined with his private studies with Yon paint a picture of a young Stalling hungry for musical knowledge—knowledge without which he would never have had the tools necessary to become the innovative composer he proved to be.

[32] ibid.
[33] ibid.

It is worth noting here that Stalling married a highly accomplished classical violinist and teacher, Gladys Baldwin, which suggests that music would have been an element of importance in his home life as well. Baldwin's name appears on both the fourth (which also includes her picture) and sixth Kansas City Conservatory catalogues, where she is listed as a teacher—apparently the assistant to the head of the violin department, Francois Boucher.[34] Additionally, many violin scores containing her name can be found in Stalling's music library, which include markings in the piano accompaniment in what seems to be Carl's hand. This suggests that the couple (married sometime around 1918) read chamber music together in private, or even performed it in public, at various points in life.

While more emphasis is generally put on Stalling's informal musical education, the time and effort that would have been required of him (as a young man and as a child) in order to earn a degree from the Kansas City Conservatory are not to be regarded as irrelevant to his development as a brilliant composer of music for cartoons. Before a composer can write music of the caliber of Stalling's, one must first have received certain foundational musical training—training we know Stalling did indeed receive. This is important because a true revolutionary is only such if he is working contrary to traditions that he knows exist and has been taught to adhere to. Stalling knew the rules and had a

[34] "Fourth Annual Catalogue": "Miss Gladys Baldwin has been studying with Francois Boucher for more than ten years and has a thorough understanding of his methods. She has taught most successfully in the conservatory the past year. Mr. Boucher says: 'She is one of the best teachers for beginners on the violin I have ever had to assist me.'"

"Sixth Annual Catalogue": "Miss Gladys Baldwin begins her fourth year as a teacher of the Violin in the Conservatory with the issuance of this Catalogue. As a teacher she has been most successful. Mr. Boucher says: 'She is one of the best teachers for beginners on the violin I have ever had associated with me."

solid understanding of classical tradition, which is exactly why his unruly music is so shocking and creative.

Informal Education

There are moments in a young boy's life that capture the imagination so completely that his life's course and destiny are forever altered. One of these moments occurred for Stalling, as a 13-year-old, sometime in the months following December 1903. It was during this time that young Carl saw his very first film.

> The first movie I ever saw was *The Great Train Robbery*. I saw it in a tent at a street fair in Lexington, around 1903. It made such an impression on me that from then on I had only one desire in life: to be connected with the movies in some way.[35]

The experience stirred him so deeply that only a year would go by before he was working in a movie house himself.

> I'd played the piano in 1904 at Lexington, where I was born. . . . In those days, they just wanted a piano going while the operator was changing reels. In cities, they had two machines, so you didn't have to wait for the next reel, but in little towns like Lexington they hadn't gotten that far yet.[36]

From there, it seems as though Stalling found the beginnings of his calling in life: bringing moving pictures to life through musical accompaniment. When he moved to Jackson County in around 1910, he got his first job playing piano for silent films at a theater in Independence, and from 1910-1928 it seems to have become his primary profession. During this period, he had stints working afternoons and evenings in theaters throughout the Kansas City and Chicago areas, including the Madrid Theater, the Grand

[35] Goldmark and Taylor, 56
[36] Goldmark and Taylor, 56

Avenue Temple Theater, the Newman Theater, the Royal Theater, and most notably, the Isis Theater. Stalling began working at the Isis as early as 1920, and he continued there as a pianist, organist, conductor, and arranger until 1928.[37]

> I played in theaters for about twenty years before sound came in. We improvised all the time, on the organ. I'd have to put music out for the orchestra, for features, but for comedies and newsreels we just improvised at the organ. So I really was used to composing for films before I started writing for cartoons. I just imagined myself playing for a cartoon in the theater, improvising, and it came easier.[38]

This really gets to the heart of why Stalling's informal education is so important. His job at the Isis turned out to be incredible training for his Warner Bros. career in almost every possible way. One of the most crucial of these elements is the improvisation that would have been required of him during comedies and cartoons. I will take a closer look at the musical particulars of Stalling's style later on in this paper, but suffice it to say, his music for cartoons is extremely improvisatory in nature, and his time improvising at the keyboard in silent film theaters led directly to the development of this aspect of his musical voice.

Before moving on, it is important that we first examine a few of the essentials of silent film accompaniment and understand what would have been expected of Stalling. The details of this side of Stalling's background are covered fairly well by Goldmark, so in an attempt to avoid redundancy, I will mention only the aspects of Stalling's work in silent film theaters that are covered less completely and are most important to this study.

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[37] Anne Marie Guzzo, "The Life and Music of Carl Stalling: From Toy Pianos to Dog Ears" (DMA diss., University of California Davis, 2002), 35.
[38] Goldmark and Taylor, 50-51

A book entitled *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures,*[39] which can be found in Stalling's personal collection, details suggestions and helpful techniques for silent film accompanists. Two passages of this book stand out as being particularly relevant to this study of Stalling's music. The first discusses the improvising musician's obligation to "study. . .the principles involved in composition" and gain a "familiarity with the rules of harmony."[40] This knowledge, as was the early focus of this chapter, is something Stalling would definitely have attained while at The Kansas City Conservatory. The second passage speaks to the need of a vast knowledge of pre-existing repertoire.

> It cannot be emphasized too strongly, that constant and diligent search for new material is all-important. . . . [The] player will learn to distinguish musical moods and will gain surety in selecting the proper material for each scene that he may encounter.[41]

Lang and West then proceed to give a non-exhaustive list of general moods as well as pieces (almost entirely classical) that correspond with and help convey these moods to film audiences **(see Fig. 3)**. This is quite obviously another ingredient of great importance to Stalling and one that would eventually contribute to the emergence of his collage or patchwork style and his heavy use of quotation, which are two of the most distinctive components of his music for cartoons. In fact, this collecting of musical materials appears to have become something of an obsession for Stalling throughout his life.[42]

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[39] Edith Lang and George West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures* (New York, Arno Press & The New York Times, 1970).
[40] Lang and West, 22-23
[41] Lang and West, 26
[42] This becomes apparent by viewing the collection of sheet music found in his library.

Fig. 3. Part of Lang and West's list of fitting silent film accompaniment.

SPECIAL CHARACTERS AND SITUATIONS

Tragedy		
a. Impending:	Tschaikowsky	1st movement from Symphonie Pathétique
	Beethoven .	1st movement from Sonata Pathétique
	Rachmaninof	Prelude, C♯ minor
b. Aftermath:	Beethoven .	2d movement from Sonata Pathétique
	Massenet . .	Elégie
	Tschaikowsky	3d movement from Symphonie Pathétique
Death	Chopin . .	Funeral March
	Beethoven .	Funeral March
	Mendelssohn .	Funeral March

(N. B. — In the presence of actual death, observe silence!)

Battle Scenes	Tschaikowsky	Overture "1812"
	Tschaikowsky	Last movement from Symphony No. 6
Storm Scenes	Rossini . . .	William Tell
	Rachmaninof	Middle section from Prelude, C♯ minor
	Beethoven .	1st movement from "Moonlight Sonata"

Villanous Characters

a. Robbers (In Drama)	Bizet . .	Smugglers' Chorus from "Carmen"
Robbers (In Comedy)	Grieg . .	In the Hall of the Mountain King
b. Sinister villain	Gounod . .	Music of Mephistopheles in "Faust"
c. Roué or vampire	Puccini . .	Music of Scarpia in "Tosca"
d. Revengeful villain	Leoncavallo	Introduction and finale from "Pagliacci"

Youthful Characters	Mendelssohn .	Spring Song
	Grieg . . .	Spring Song
	Grieg . . .	Butterflies
	Nevin . . .	Mighty Lak a Rose
Old Age	Orth . . .	What the Old Oak Said
	Danks . . .	Silver Threads Among the Gold
	Hopekirk . .	Sundown

Stalling's personal library consists of a trove of materials that were likely used during his theater years and later on during his time working with cartoons. There is a very large collection entitled *ABC Dramatic Set*, compiled by Ernst Luz from 1915-1920.[43] This is a collection of themes, melodies, and other musical materials categorized by the moods of on-screen actions they were intended to accompany. This particular compilation was intended to aid film accompanists like Stalling in their search for suitable materials for use. Luz, himself, was an important name in the silent film industry. He was not only responsible for distributing materials similar to the *ABC Dramatic Set* to hundreds of musicians and theater organists but also for composing a number of the cue sheets that were distributed with various silent films when producers wanted more control over what music was accompanying their films.

Stalling's library also contains a catalogue, hundreds of pages long, including thousands of titles of pieces, the type of arrangement available for each piece, the arranger, composer, publisher, and catalogue number **(see Fig. 4)**. This is an enormous, hand-typed list that would probably have been used by Stalling as one of his main sources while compiling cue sheets for his Warner Bros. scores. It includes works of myriad musical styles, including a vast number of classical compositions, jazz standards, pop songs, and other miscellaneous titles.

Also notable in Stalling's collection is the remarkably large number of opera overtures he possessed. Many of these are heavily marked, indicating that they were of much use to him throughout his career (as can also be seen by how often themes from opera overtures show up on his Warner Bros. cue sheets). The rest of his musical

[43] Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 360-362.

Fig. 4. A page from Stalling's catalogue of available repertoire (courtesy of The University of Wyoming).

C-13363	"Rosamunde"	Full Orch	Weninger	F. Schubert
	Entr'Acte Et Musique De Ballet	"		
13364	Rosamunde (Ballet Suite)	"	Roberts	"
13365	Menuetto From Symphony # 5	"	H. Anderson	"
13366	Schubert Songs (Schubert Lieder)	"	C. Roberts	"
	1. The Erl King			
	2. The Trout			
	3. Cradle Song			
	4. Hedge Rose			
	5. Ave Maria			
	6. Hark, Hark, The Lark			
	7. Serenade			
	8. By The Sea			
	9. To Be Sung On The Water			
	10. My Sweet Repose			
	11. The Wanderer			
	12. Praise Of Tears			
	13. Gretchen At the Spinning Wheel			
	14. Omnipotence			
13367	Rosamunde (Overture)	"	Moses	F. Schubert
13368	Two Favorite Classics From Schubert	"	Langey	"
13369	"Plantation Melody"	"	Baron	A. Farwell
	"Who Is Sylvia"	"	"	F. Schubert
13370	Reverie	"	Roberts	E. Schutt
13371	A La Bien-Aimee	"	"	"
13372	Andante Cantabile From Trt Piano Quartet Op. 47	"	Langey	R. Schumann
13373	Happiness Enough	"	H. Sanford	R. Schumann
13374	Festival Overture	"	Margis; Berger	R. Schumann
13375	By The Fireside	"	Raph	R. Schumann
13376	Andante Pathetique # 1	"	Langey	R. Schumann
13377	Album Suite # 2	"	Motton	R. Schumann
	1. Chanson Champetre			
	2. Chanson De Printemps			
	3. Intermezzo			
	4. Chant De Guerre			
13378	Album (Suite # 1)	"	Motton	R. Schumann
	1. Le Gai Laboreur			
	2. Chanson Populaire			
	3. Le Joli Mois De Mai			
	4. Le Voyageur			

	Benjamin
	C. Fischer
	BMI
	C. Fischer
	C. Fischer
	G. Schirmer
	C. Fischer
	"
	C. Fischer
	G. Schirmer
	BMI
	C. Fischer
	BMI
	G. Schirmer
	Durand

collection consists of classical standards—including obviously-studied miniature scores of symphonies by Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms—and an enormous amount of sheet music for popular songs. In all, considering his Warner Bros. cue sheets, this is exactly what one would expect his library to look like—a mishmash of almost every kind of music available to him at the time.

Chapter 3

Musical and Structural Precedent in 18th- and 19th-Century Theater

While Stalling's music is indeed revolutionary and unconventional, it is important to understand that there exists some significant 18th- and 19th-century precedent for his radical compositional structures and his use of parody and quotation. As is mentioned in the previous chapter, Stalling's music was highly influenced by the traditions of silent film accompaniment. But to be satisfied at that, without investigating the origins of musical accompaniment for the theater, would be to overlook the deeper roots of Stalling's style. Thus, it is necessary to take a brief look at some of the theatrical genres partially responsible for inspiring the silent film and cartoon industries—namely, vaudeville, burlesque, comic operetta, melodrama and the minstrel show. Information on each one of these genres could easily fill multiple papers of this scale, so it is best if I remain relatively brief in order to retain my focus on Carl Stalling. It is also important to note that there is no existing evidence to suggest that Stalling was directly influenced by specifics from any of the above theatrical genres. Rather, I aim to show how these genres

lead to the stylistic genesis of silent film accompanying in general, and therefore indirectly to Stalling. We'll begin by taking a step back to the early days of moving pictures, when the most common venue for experiencing this new art was the vaudeville theater.

Vaudeville

The features of late 19th- and early 20th-century American vaudeville can best be understood by comparing them to those of the modern-day variety show. Vaudeville programs from this period could include everything from acrobats, mimes, dancers, singers, contortionists, comedians, instrumental virtuosos, ventriloquists, animal tricks, and even early motion pictures.[44] Each performer or group of performers would have an allotted amount of time on stage (often around fifteen minutes each), after which they were followed by the next act, and the next. There was little arch or continuity to vaudeville programs. Rather, they consisted of a succession of one quick blitz of entertainment after another in an attempt to keep the audience's interest at a peak throughout the program. The general structure of vaudeville performances bears undeniable similarities to the arch-less, gag-to-gag organization of many of the Warner Bros. shorts Stalling composed for, and this style of stage entertainment appears to have contributed major structural influences to these cartoons. Much of the comedy found in Bugs's and Daffy's ridiculous shenanigans originates, as Goldmark puts it, "from the pratfalls and explosions typical to cartoons, especially those in the vaudeville-based style of the Warner Bros. shorts."[45] The acts were generally upbeat and of a lighthearted

[44] Altman, 99 (Fig. 6.3)
[45] Goldmark, 154

nature, and this sort of atmosphere provided a broader, much more family friendly entertainment than that enjoyed by Burlesque, from which vaudeville derives much of its roots.[46]

Burlesque and Comic Operetta

Some of the deepest musical and satirical roots of Warner Bros.'s animated shorts lie in the burlesque tradition. Burlesque is a very broad term that is difficult to label as a single entity, as it encompasses many elements from other, more clearly defined stage and musical genres (namely those found in vaudeville, the minstrel show, and Italian Baroque opera). Near the end of the nineteenth century, American burlesque had a reputation for being a much more risqué version of vaudevillian variety,[47] as programs often included stripteases, off-color humor, and other suggestive, adult themes. While American burlesque differs in many ways from its early European inspiration, satire and parody have been at the heart of the burlesque tradition throughout its history. An early example of this can be seen in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). This highly popular, highly influential ballad opera is a satiric work meant to poke fun at the English social elite and Italian Baroque opera. One of the key ways in which it achieves its aims is through the use of popular music as a tool for social commentary.[48] Gay used folk songs and other popular tunes of the day and added his own provocative lyrics. Part of the brilliance of *The Beggar's Opera* is found in the idea that a majority of the audience would probably have had the original lyrics of these songs in the back of their minds as

[46] Altman, 95
[47] Altman, 95-96
[48] Altman, 33

they were listening to Gay's new lyrics, thus adding an extra layer of comedy and meaning.[49] This was common not only with Gay's work but with much of the burlesque music that followed it:

> Popular songs have a long history on the stage. . . . Throughout the nineteenth century, audience familiarity with popular song lyrics was exploited in order to add a level of narration to well-known plays. Familiar dramas whose title or lyrics offered everything from veiled commentary to outright lampoons.[50]

The idea of using popular music to achieve a level of sub-textual comedy is an idea that Stalling embraced wholeheartedly throughout his career:

> Let's suppose. . .that Stalling, for the sake of a truly funny take on a film, purposely chose music that went against the grain. That is, what if the idea linking the music and the image led to its own gag, which itself relied on recognizing the song's words as inapposite in the context of that moment of the film? Stalling probably caught on to this practice early in his career, and it became his trademark as a composer.[51]

While this was often an extremely effective technique for Stalling, one downside is that in using quotations from all over Warner's enormous catalogue of copyrighted music in addition to those in the public domain (some more popular to the public than others), many of the extra layers of comedy found in his scores go by without being recognized—especially to today's younger audiences, who even in exceptional instances are only mildly familiar with popular tunes from the first half of the twentieth century. Unless you are looking at a cue sheet, for example, it is not easy to pick up on the fact that the balletic wrestler, Ravishing Ronald, and his mascot (Bugs Bunny) are introduced to the tune of Raymond Scott's *Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals* as they are

[49] Julian Mates, *America's Musical Stage: Two Hundred Years of Musical Theatre* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 23.
[50] Altman, 220
[51] Goldmark, 15

carried into the ring on giant dinner platters to be "eaten alive" by world champion, The Crusher, in *Bunny Hugged* (1951).

The resemblances between Stalling's use of musical satire and that found in early burlesque pieces like *The Beggar's Opera* are easily seen. Take, for instance, Stalling's work on the Warner Bros. short *Rabbit of Seville* (1950). The parody in this spoof on Rossini's *Barber of Seville* is similar in its employment to that of Gay's. In this short, Stalling and his cohorts at Warner Bros. add the most bizarre and hilarious lyrics to the overture to Rossini's opera **(see Fig. 5)**. The comedy found in combining the serious with the absurd is instantly recognized by the viewer, as the short is set in a classical concert setting, complete with politely applauding audience, pit orchestra, and a tuxedo-clad conductor. Compare this with a representative moment from Gay's work, and the parallel becomes clearer:

> [Gay] sets Polly's Air 17, "O what pain it is to part" to a tune the original text of which was "Gin thou wert mine awn thing" as if foretelling the general debauchery soon to come in Act 2. This ironic commentary. . .[achieves] hilarious results.[52]

This brand of satire can be found in burlesque and comic operettas throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and is in no way limited to *The Beggar's Opera*.[53] While Stalling may not have been directly influenced by such works, his love for spoofing highbrow opera culture and classical music by deforming it to fit his comedic purposes is evident throughout his body of work, and this was clearly not a novel idea in the scope of music history.

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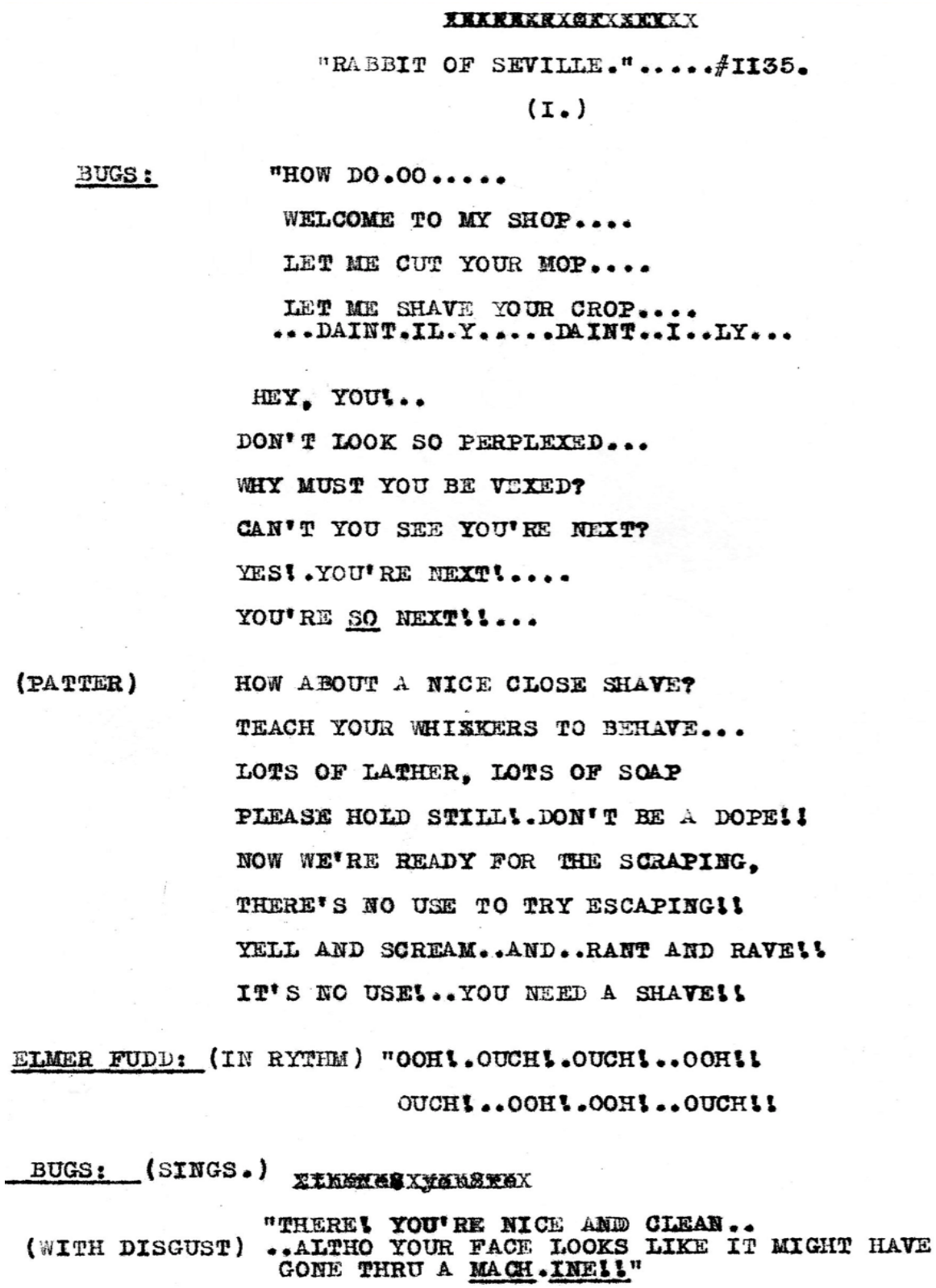
[52] Daniel Heartz, "'The Beggar's Opera' and Opéra-Comique en Vaudevilles," *Early Music* 21, no. 1, Music and Spectacle (Feb 1999), 50.
[53] Mates, 166

Fig. 5. Hand-typed lyrics used in *Rabbit of Seville* (Courtesy of The University of Wyoming).



"RABBIT OF SEVILLE."....#1135.

(I.)

BUGS: "HOW DO.OO.....
WELCOME TO MY SHOP....
LET ME CUT YOUR MOP....
LET ME SHAVE YOUR CROP....
...DAINT.IL.Y.....DAINT..I..LY...

HEY, YOU!..
DON'T LOOK SO PERPLEXED...
WHY MUST YOU BE VEXED?
CAN'T YOU SEE YOU'RE NEXT?
YES!.YOU'RE NEXT!....
YOU'RE SO NEXT!!...

(PATTER) HOW ABOUT A NICE CLOSE SHAVE?
TEACH YOUR WHISKERS TO BEHAVE...
LOTS OF LATHER, LOTS OF SOAP
PLEASE HOLD STILL!.DON'T BE A DOPE!!
NOW WE'RE READY FOR THE SCRAPING,
THERE'S NO USE TO TRY ESCAPING!!
YELL AND SCREAM..AND..RANT AND RAVE!!
IT'S NO USE!..YOU NEED A SHAVE!!

ELMER FUDD: (IN RYTHM) "OOH!.OUCH!.OUCH!..OOH!!
OUCH!..OOH!.OOH!..OUCH!!

BUGS: (SINGS.)

(WITH DISGUST) "THERE! YOU'RE NICE AND CLEAN..
..ALTHO YOUR FACE LOOKS LIKE IT MIGHT HAVE
GONE THRU A MACH.INE!!"

"RABBIT OF SEVILLE."...#1135.
(2.)

ELMER FUDD: "OOO.OH!! WAIT'LL I GET THAT WABBIT!!"

BUGS: (AS SENORITA) "WHAT WOULD YOU WANT WITH A WABBIT?
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I'M MUCH SWEETER?
I'M YOUR LITTLE SENIORITER..
YOU..ARE MY TYPE OF GUY...
LET ME STRAIGHTEN YOUR TIE
AND I SHALL DANCE FOR YOU!!"

BUGS: (TO AUDIENCE) "EH...NEXT??"

Melodrama and the Minstrel Show

Melodrama and the minstrel show are different from each other in a variety of fundamental ways, but they both share a few important musical traits that are worth mentioning here, as these certainly made a substantial impact on silent film accompaniment. Musically, the former is the more important of the two in this respect, but the latter is also quite relevant to the discussion.

The American minstrel show is a brand of racially disparaging comedy that finds its roots in the court entertainment and buffoonery of medieval and Renaissance minstrels. In 19th- and early 20th-century America, it became inseparably connected with a wholesale stereotyping of black culture, as it often included a mockery of the music and speech of the black community. Racist comedy of this nature was extremely popular at the time, and it eventually found its way into many early films—and subsequently

cartoons—of the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, it even became the catalyst behind much of the use of jazz music in early sound films and cartoons:

> Stereotypes figured not only in the stories and design format of the cartoons but also in their scores. Particular songs that originated in minstrel shows or vaudeville routines came to signify black culture. . . . Such songs may have functioned well as recognizable melodic cues for individual black characters; at the same time, the rhythms and textures of jazz provided the sound that most often signaled to white viewers the stereotyped black community and its culture.[54]

Long before jazz, however, the 19th-century beginnings of the minstrel show included equally stereotypical musical accompaniment during the stage entrances and exits of minstrel characters (usually in dehumanizing blackface makeup). The practice of choosing musical accompaniment with the intent of communicating something specific about the onstage action and characters probably derived from a similar function of music in the genre of melodrama.[55]

Melodrama is "the technique of using short passages of music in alternation with or accompanying the spoken word to heighten its dramatic effect."[56] Silent film accompaniment likely owes its greatest debt to melodramatic musical practices, and it is quite possible that Stalling would have been familiar with such popular stage practices during his formative years. Reminiscent of the *ABC Dramatic Set* of appropriate silent film accompaniment material found in Stalling's library, this music was separated into instantly accessible emotions and actions.

> Musical selections were typically short, either written for the play at hand or borrowed from printed collections of stock compositions. . . . Extant collections of "melos" are classified by general categories reflecting tempo, provenance or probable applications. These short numbers carry such generic titles as "hurry,"

[54] Goldmark, 83-84
[55] Mates, 79
[56] *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Melodrama" by Peter Branscombe.

> "furioso," "Irish reel," "melancholy," or "storm," with the expectation that they could be slotted as is into any appropriate theatrical situation.[57]

These generic titles are nearly identical to those given to a vast number of the materials found in the *ABC Dramatic Set*. Some early melodramatic plays even have surviving cue sheets, which were intended to better inform the accompanying musicians of the kind of music they should be playing and when.[58] These early cue sheets differ only minimally in their construction when compared to those produced by Stalling during his Warner Bros. years, and the melodramatic idea of music consisting of a series of quickly and easily interpreted human emotions is one that would define his entire career. One need only listen to a Stalling score or view one of his cue sheets—any one of the hundreds—to understand that this is probably the clearest and most distinctive element of his work. Even though early melodramatic music typically alternated with spoken dialogue and often had little connection to the onstage action, music's role within the genre gradually grew, as did its direct reflection of the plots and characters in the drama. Eventually, it would directly usher in silent film accompaniment and its highly mood-based and descriptive music. Carl Stalling would follow shortly thereafter with the creation of a musical aesthetic and sound that almost immediately became part of the identity of the very medium for which he was composing.

[57] Altman, 37
[58] Altman, 36

Chapter 4

Structural Precedent in the Early Piano Cycles of Robert Schumann

One common thread shared by almost all of the theatrical genres mentioned in the previous chapter is a historical connection to the stock characters and situations of the *commedia dell'arte*. *Commedia dell'arte* was "originally a type of improvised street entertainment using masks, exaggerated costumes, and traditional songs."[59] Although the roots of *commedia dell'arte* go back much further, its popularity peaked in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its influences were still felt quite strongly, however, as late as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as characters like Harlequin, Pantaloon, Pierrot, Scaramouch, Pulcinella, and Colombine frequently show up in theater and music during these centuries. The situations were ridiculous and the characters mostly buffoons and highly immoral scoundrels involved in outlandish schemes of love and power, all in the name of comedy and social satire.

> The performances always ended on an upbeat note, bringing attendant laughter at a world turned topsy turvy where servants outwit masters, young lovers escape the traps laid for them by lecherous old men, pompous professors are reduced to a ridiculous position, and military swaggarts are done in—escapist adventure not unlike that of a modern television sitcom.[60]

These masked characters were especially popular during Carnival, the festive weeks leading up to Lent.[61] The celebrations during this time often included parades, masquerades, circuses, and commonly involved elements of last-minute excess and

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[59] John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 52

[60] Diane M. Cammarata, "Masking: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Commedia dell'Arte: Echos of Laughter" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1996), 64.

[61] Cammarata, 58

debauchery before Lent, a period of sacrifice and humility (ideals hardly embraced by the likes of Harlequin, Pantaloon, and their *commedia dell'arte* comrades).

Throughout history, many composers have derived artistic inspiration from *commedia dell'arte* characters and situations, but the music of one such composer bears particularly intriguing aesthetic and structural similarities to the work of Carl Stalling. This composer is Robert Schumann, and the similarities that his early character pieces share with Stalling's cartoon music certainly warrant comparative examination if we are to truly understand how Stalling's capricious—yet notated and deliberate—music relates in historical context to capricious—yet notated—music of the common practice period.[62]

While in his formative years, Stalling would almost assuredly have studied music written by Schumann, though any suggestion that he was directly influenced by Schumann's work would be dubious at best. It would not be surprising should evidence of this nature ever emerge, but as far as can be seen, no such evidence does exist. Stalling's library contains a substantial amount of music by Schumann, but not in any greater quantity than scores by other reputable composers. And while music by Schumann is quoted in many of Stalling's scores,[63] pieces by Rossini, Wagner, and Raymond Scott are used far more frequently. I therefore intend only to present Schumann's music as sophisticated, 19th-century precedent for many of Stalling's techniques rather than as a direct inspiration to his compositional approach. I would like to focus this comparative analysis on particularly relevant sections from two piano works by Schumann—*Carnaval*, op. 9 and *Papillons,* op. 2—and three representative shorts by

[62] The age of "tonal" music, roughly spanning the years 1650-1900.
[63] According to p. 531 of Goldmark's dissertation, *Träumerei* (from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, op. 15) alone appears in no fewer than nine Warner Bros. shorts from 1937-1953.

Stalling, *There They Go-Go-Go* (1956), *A Bear For Punishment* (1951), and *The Snowman* (1932).[64]

Much scholarly research has been done over the past couple of decades on narrativity in the music of Schumann—especially within his early piano cycles. A great deal of this research has dealt with Schumann's connection to the novels of Jean Paul, which Schumann openly acknowledged were highly influential to his own artistic aesthetic. Erica Reiman's book on the subject[65] is quite thorough and discusses Jean Paul's prose and literary structure as they relate to Schumann's own musical prose and structure.[66] Entire chapters are dedicated to a detailed analysis of Jean Paul's use of digression as a literary technique and how Schumann often transferred this technique into music. As the genesis of Schumann's remarkable formal and stylistic practices is not the topic of this paper, though, I point the reader to Reiman's research and bibliography for a greater understanding in that area. It is important, instead, merely to recognize Jean Paul's influence on Schumann, because it is a significant indication that Schumann, particularly early in his career, explored musical narrativity in ways similar to that seen in Stalling's work. In fact, Schumann's *Papillons*—by his own admission—is a musical

[64] Guzzo, 45-46: "score and sketch studies are problematic since much of Stalling's music was short-sightedly thrown out by Warner Bros. during the 1960s." To my knowledge, the only Stalling scores available for study reside in the Warner Bros. Archives at USC (where there is a very limited number) and the Stalling collection at the University of Wyoming (where there are even fewer).

[65] Erika Reimann, *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004).

[66] Reiman, 2: "I wish only to point to the extensive similarities of structural process and aesthetic sensibility that exist in Jean Paul's novels and Schumann's early music and to make a preliminary attempt at forging a descriptive vocabulary for these similarities—in other words, to shed some light on Schumann's assertion that he "learned more counterpoint from [Jean Paul] than from his music teacher."

representation of the scenes depicting a masquerade ball at the end of Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre*.[67] This idea of the masquerade seems to be one that enchanted Schumann in his early career, and he even referred to *Carnaval* as a set of "masked dances."[68]

Not only are *Carnaval* and *Papillons* musical masquerades, but the participants in the masquerade that is *Carnaval* happen to be Schumann's own friends, love interests, colleagues, Schumann himself, and none other than Harlequin, Pierrot, Pantaloon, and Colombine from the theatrical *commedia dell'arte* tradition. *Carnaval* is a single work in twenty-two sections. These sections each bear their own title, and many of them go by the name of an actual person (sometimes a pseudonym representing an actual person) or a *commedia dell'arte* character. The titles, their order within the piece, and brief descriptions of the title character of each movement can be seen in **Fig. 6**. The organization of *Papillons* is similar in that it is comprised of multiple small movements: twelve untitled movements in that case. In both pieces, there are musical materials (most notably the motifs found in the "Sphinxes" movement of *Carnaval*) that act as the harmonic and thematic backbones of the respective works, but those elements are also for another analysis.[69] I would like, instead, to focus on much more basic structural and stylistic elements.

[67] For a closer look into the specifics of *Papillons*'s narrative connection to *Flegeljahre*, I point the reader to Eric Frederick Jensen's insightful article on the subject: "Explicating Jean Paul: Robert Schumann's Program for 'Papillons,' Op. 2," *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 2 (Autumn 1998): 127-143.
[68] Jensen, 136
[69] A first-rate analysis of this nature can be found in Peter Kaminsky's article entitled: "Principals of Formal Structure in Schumann's Early Piano Cycles," *Music Theory Spectrum* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1989): 207-225.

Fig. 6. The basic construction of Carnaval.

1. Preambule
(introduction)

2. Pierrot
(foolish and naïve)

3. Arlequin
(acrobatic fool, love interest of Colombine)

4. Valse Noble

5. Eusebius
(representing the meek and poetic side of Schumann's personality)

6. Florestan
(representing the aggressive side of Schumann's personality)

7. Coquette
(a flirtatious girl)

8. Réplique
(replica or reflection)

9. Sphinxes
(three musical motifs found throughout the piece)

10. Papillons
(butterflies or the metamorphosis thereof)

11. A.S.C.H.—S.C.H.A.
(the note names of the motifs found in Sphinxes)

12. Chiarina
(a pseudonym for Clara Wieck, his future wife)

13. Chopin
(a composer whom Schumann greatly admired)

14. Estrella
(a pseudonym for Ernestine von Fricken, Schumann's fiancée)

15. Reconnaissance

16. Pantalon et Colombine
(miser father and beautiful daughter)

17. Valse Allemande

18. Paganini
(the virtuoso violinist and composer)

19. Aveu
(a confession or vow)

20. Promenade

21. Pause

22. Marche des "Davidsbündler" contre les Philistins
(the metaphorical march of Schumann and his real and figurative friends against the Philistines of high art)

With that in mind, I turn to Jensen's article. Here, we find "four distinctive traits in the music composed by Schumann during the 1830s that appear to owe much to his reading of Jean Paul." These four traits are as follows:

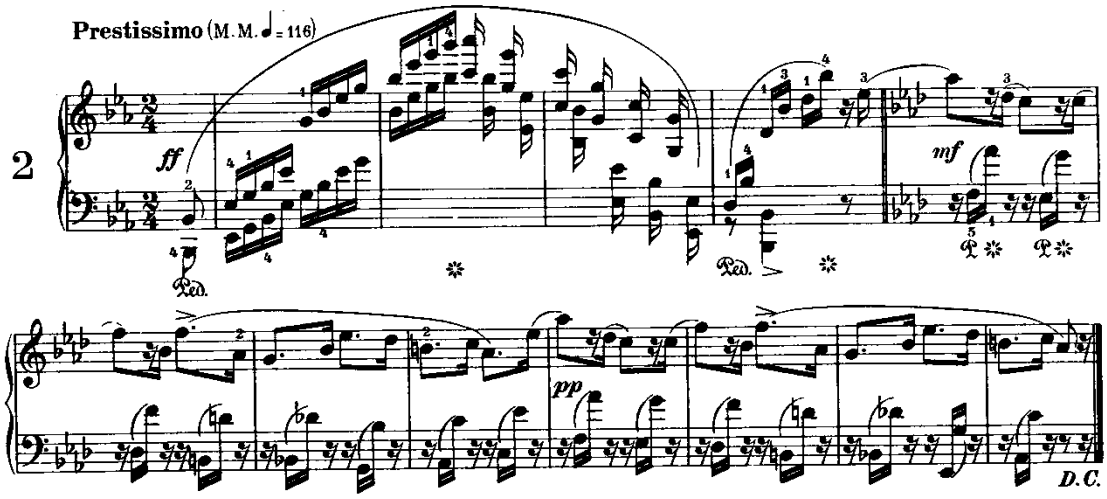
1. "The propensity for brief, almost aphoristic musical statements."
2. "A love for mystery and concealed meaning."
3. "The quotation of thematic material from previous compositions in new ones."
4. "The often abrupt juxtaposition of grotesque humor with elements of profound sentiment."[70]

These four compositional traits represent the foundation for my comparative analysis of Schumann and Stalling, and I aim to illustrate how each of the four could easily have been used to describe the work of either composer.

Let me begin with Jensen's "trait 1"—aphoristic musical statements—by taking a closer look at movements 2, 6, and 10 from *Papillons*. Movement 2, *Prestissimo*, is a minuscule twelve measures in its entirety **(see Fig. 7)**. It consists of one 4-bar flourish in E-flat major, followed by a quick change of key and two statements of a 4-bar phrase in A-flat major. This phrase in A-flat contains motivic connections (namely the stepwise motion opposite to that found in the preceding movement) as well as rhythmic connections to the rest of the work, but this specific music is never to return in the cycle. Reminiscent in its construction to the opening phrase of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E Major, op. 109 (itself brief and somewhat aphoristic), this particular phrase—nearly the whole movement in itself—is here and gone in mere seconds.

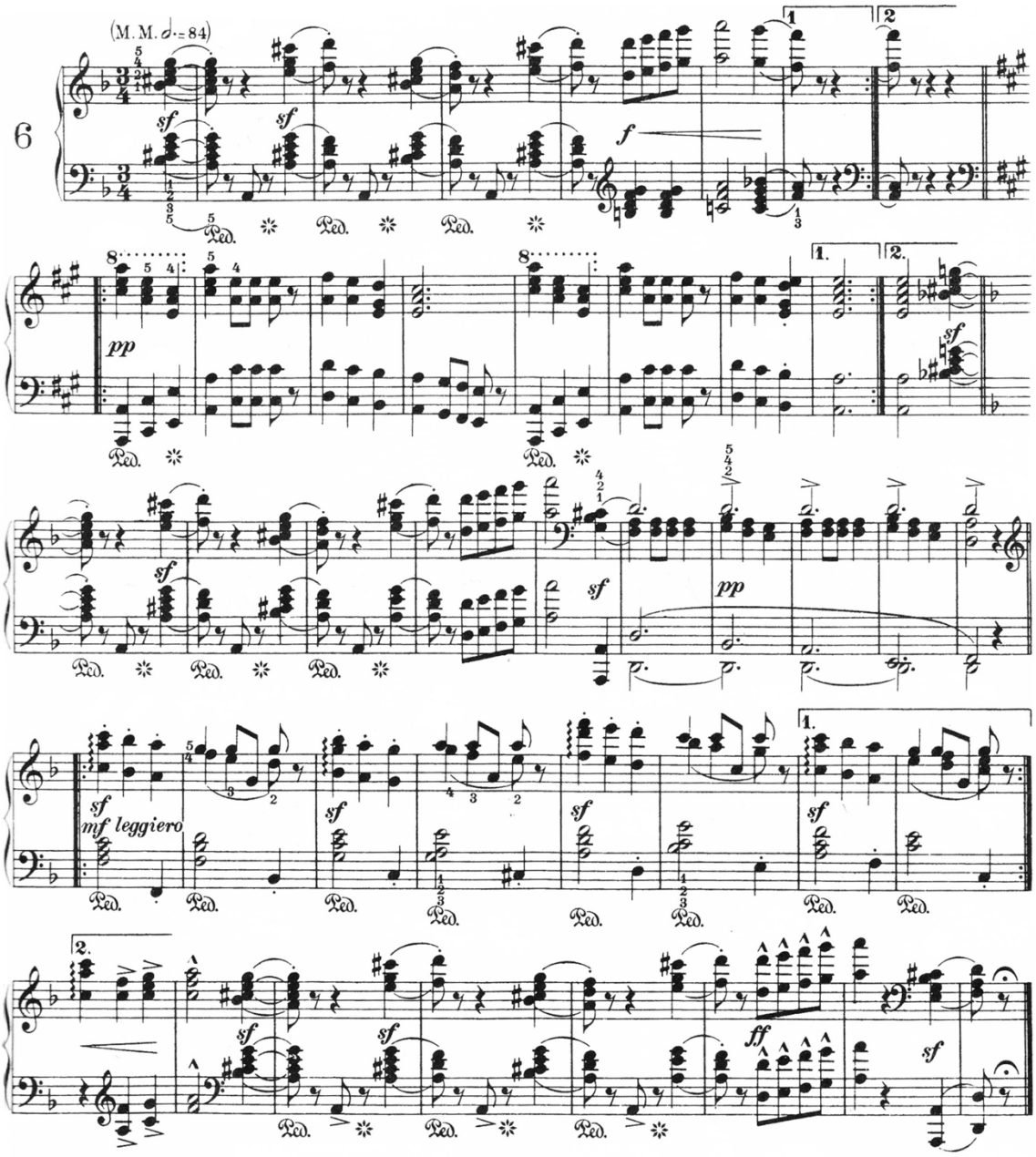
[70] Jensen, 133-134

Fig. 7. Movement 2 of Schumann's *Papillons*.



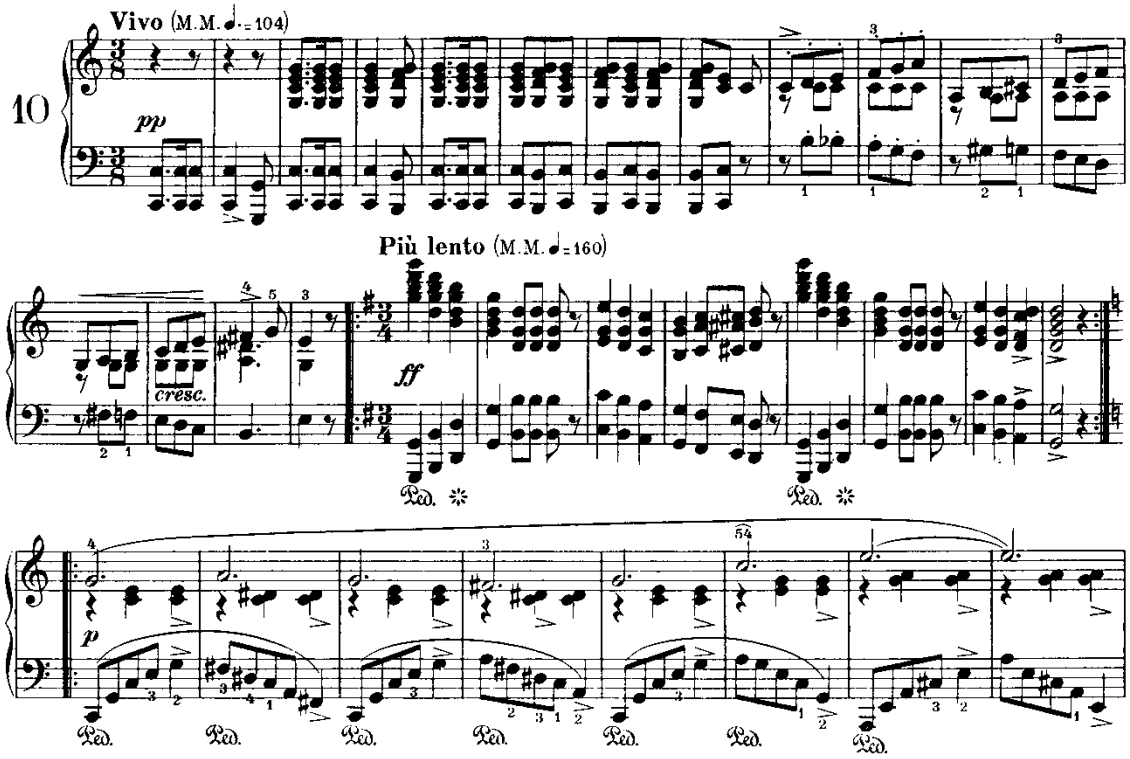
A similar use of patchwork musical aphorisms can be found in movement 6 **(see Fig. 8)**. Here, Schumann begins with a *Sturm und Drang* temperament in the key of F major. The tonic key is only felt in the final measure of this 6-bar phrase, as the rest of the phrase is consumed by sforzando, diminished seventh chords over a mediant pedal. The storm and stress is quickly overtaken by a sweet, pianissimo waltz in A major, consisting of only eight bars. This 8-bar phrase promptly disappears from movement 6 and is not heard from again until movement 10. It is interrupted by a brief return of the sforzando, diminished seventh chords (m. 14, second ending), which die out without a repeat this time and are instead replaced by a staccato, *leggiero* phrase. This new phrase is much more clearly in F major (m. 25), and when it disappears eight bars later, it does not return at any point in the course of the cycle. After one final statement of the diminished seventh chords, the movement comes to an unexpected close in D minor. The "mediant" turns out to have been the dominant all along.

Fig. 8. Movement 6 of Schumann's *Papillons*.



My final brief example of musical patchwork in *Papillons* (though these are by no means the only examples available) is the first half of movement 10 **(see Fig. 9)**. This movement begins in C major with an 8-bar phrase evoking the music of a fanfare or a hunt, with its dotted rhythms, fifths, and 2-bar couplings. This music is immediately left

Fig. 9. Movement 10 of Schumann's *Papillons*, measures 1-32.



behind and replaced by an 8-bar, staccato phrase in contrary motion, which resolves awkwardly in E minor. Instantly following this cadence comes the return of the sweet little 8-bar waltz phrase from movement 6, except this time, it is not quite so sweet. At a fortissimo dynamic, it is now regal and stately. This phrase lasts only as long as it did in movement 6 (eight bars), however this time, it is followed by a very romantic, smooth, and lyrical waltz in C major (m. 17).

All three of these examples clearly highlight Schumann's ability to jump from idea to idea, disregarding traditional formal and developmental practices of the time. Examples like those found in movements 2, 6, and 10 of *Papillons* can be found throughout the entire cycle. The work is an example of Schumann at his strangest, formally speaking, and it is an extraordinary model of the patchwork techniques that are

present in so much of his early piano cycles and character pieces. In comparing this to Stalling's work, one does not have to look too deeply to see the similarities when it comes to trait 1 as listed by Jensen. These similarities are quickly apparent on the surface and quite easy to hear.

Stalling's score for Warner Bros.'s *There They Go-Go-Go* (1956) is organized with a general structure comparable to that of *Papillons*. This is a Roadrunner short, and its plot is the same as almost every Roadrunner short: Wile E. Coyote wants to catch Roadrunner, so he devises various, ridiculous plans that he hopes will facilitate this objective, only to see them backfire and seriously harm him instead. The score for this short is comprised of seven distinct sections—each labeled by Stalling with Roman numerals—that even follow a similar musical arch to that of *Papillons* **(see Fig. 10)**. For example, two musical themes found in section 2 (the chase theme and Wile E. Coyote's frantic jumping theme) return in section 7, reminiscent of the way the theme to movement 1 of *Papillons* returns in movement 12. This return of musical material brings an element of unity to the score and demonstrates that it is more than a mere cut-and-paste job or a mickey-mousing of the on-screen action. While the motion from aphoristic phrase to aphoristic phrase in *Papillons* is short indeed, the changes in Stalling's music can go by much more quickly. To highlight this element of Stalling's music, I turn to section 2 of *There They Go-Go-Go*. Picking up from the flute solo holding on the dominant of C major in bar 16 **(see Fig. 11)**, the flute soars higher and higher for three bars before it is interrupted by a 1-bar statement of contentment in the strings (m. 19). A pizzicato descent takes over from there and lands on the dominant of C—which takes up no more than two bars—after which the string section jumps abruptly to the tonality of E

Fig. 10. Formal structure of *There They Go-Go-Go*.

Section I:

Form = A/B
A = title screen,
B = credits

Section II:

Form = A/B
A = mickey-mousing (mud scenario)
B = beginning of chase

Section III:

Form = A/B
A = rope and spear gag
B = pistol on spring gag

Section IV:

Form = A/B
A = knife in tree gag
B = half of spinning mace gag

Section V:

Form = A
A = second half of spinning mace gag

Section VI:

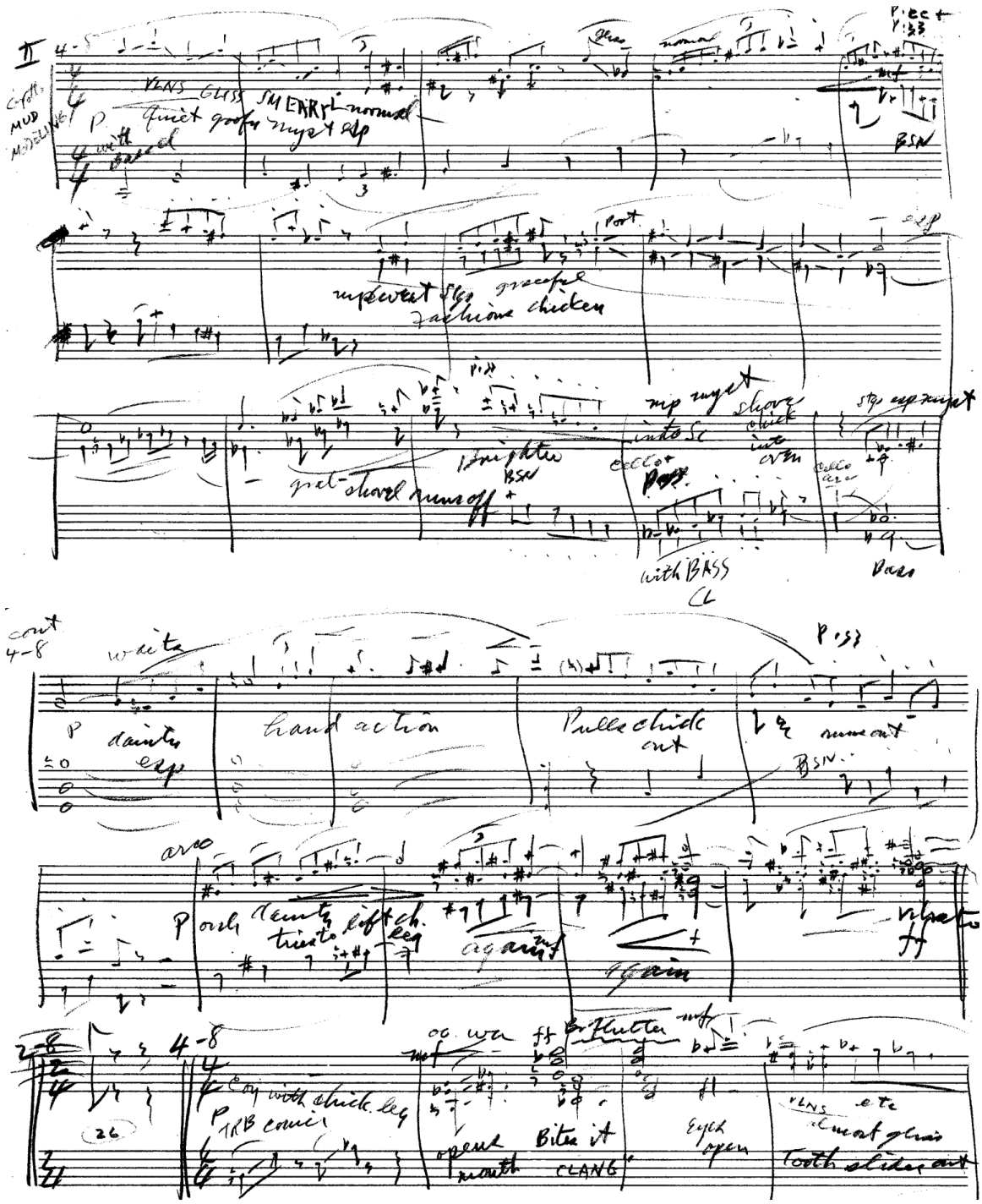
Form = A
A = ladder gag

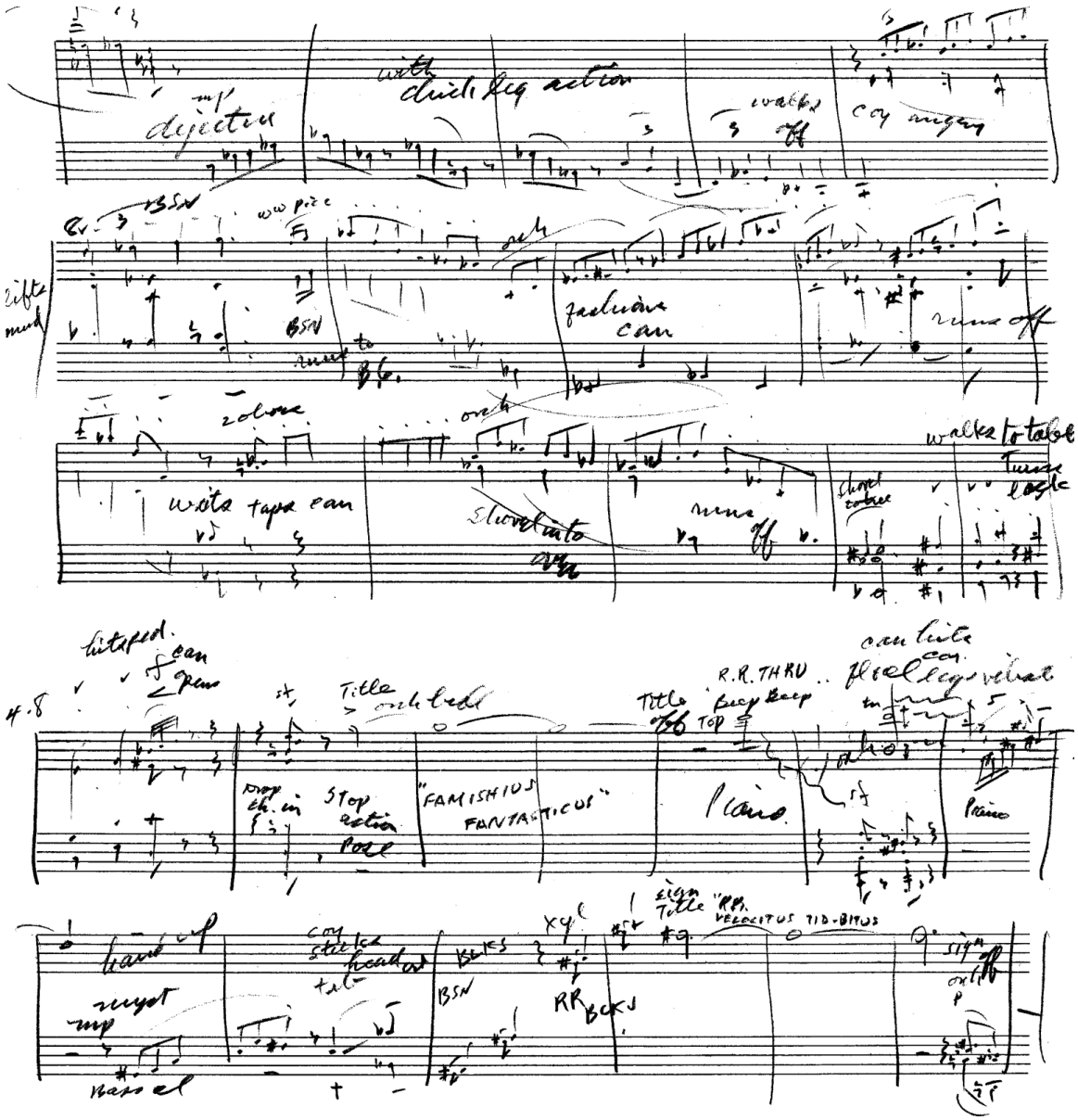
Section VII:

Form = A
A = dynamite wheel gag, rocket gag, and boulders trap (no discernible change of music between these three gags)

major, where the music gradually and chromatically rises in intensity and dynamic until it reaches all-out fortissimo (m. 25). After nearly a full bar of silence, the trombone contributes two comic, muted scoops and is quickly joined by the rest of the brass section, as it lands on a dissonant "stinger" chord, synchronized with Wile E. knocking his own tooth out (m. 28). The violins then chromatically descend on augmented chords for a bar and a half, and a lone bassoon takes over, meandering for four bars ending in m. 35. The full orchestra rises to the dominant of C a bar later, but in place of a resolution, we get staccato winds for a bar (m. 37). The strings continue a bit anxiously in the

Fig. 11. Stalling's sketch for section 2 of *There They Go-Go-Go*.





following two bars only to be overtaken again by the pizzicato winds and a repeated B-flat and A in the trumpets (m. 40). After a bit more meandering in the strings and winds, we finally reach the brass chords that lead to the "ding" of the triangle and the introduction of Wile E. as "Famishous Fantasticus."

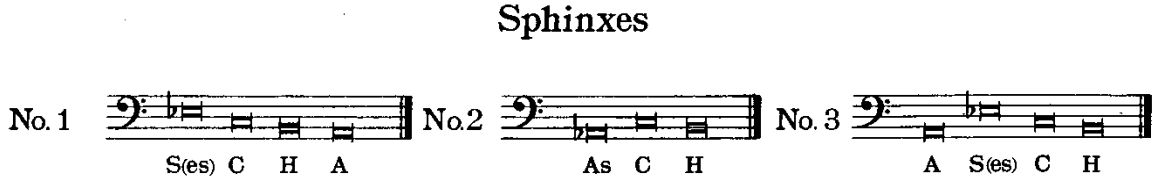
Part A of section 2, where the above example can be found, makes up the majority of this short's mickey-mousing. Stalling's musical changes of affect move the quickest during his use of the mickey-mousing technique, which is why I chose to highlight this particular section of the cartoon. It doesn't necessarily represent the most creative music of the short, but it acts as a very good example of just how quickly he can jump from distinct phrase to distinct phrase through this technique, and the ear immediately picks up on the disjunct nature of the music. This section lasts for a duration of about forty seconds, or thirty-one bars. Within those forty seconds—at my most conservative estimation—there are no fewer than seven clear changes of affect, color, dynamic, or all of the above combined.

Another common way Stalling jumps from one sound to another in his music is by abruptly changing musical styles (e.g., from classical to pop, from folk to jazz, etc.). This element fits a bit better into a discussion on Jensen's trait 4, though, so I will return to it shortly.

Trait 2—a love for mystery and concealed meaning—can most easily be seen in Schumann's *Carnaval* by viewing the movement entitled "Sphinxes" **(see Fig. 12)**. It is a bit difficult to call "Sphinxes" a movement, however, and in fact, many pianists performing the work will omit it from the cycle altogether. The "movement" consists of three musical motifs. No. 1 is made up of four notes: E-flat, C, B, and A. No. 2 is three notes: A-flat, C, and B. No. 3 is four notes: A, E-flat, C, and B. Taking into account the German spellings of the notes, these musical phrases end up spelling ASCH and SCHA[71] (see movement 11, which goes by that very title). Especially considering the conventions

[71] In German, S = ES, or E-flat, and H = B

Fig. 12. "Sphinxes" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.



of the time, this is an incredibly strange mystery to find in the middle of a cycle of character pieces. There are a number of theories on the possible meaning behind these notes, but it is generally believed that ASCH represents the German city by the same name, and that SCHA represents the musical letters found in Schumann's own name.[72] The reason the city Asch is significant in this particular instance is that it was the home city of Ernestine von Fricken, Schumann's fiancée. The three motifs of "Sphinxes" can be found throughout the entire cycle (on scales large and small), and they turn out to be the cells from which the work as a whole grows. The purpose for composing a cycle around these mysterious motifs can only be speculated upon, but there is undoubtedly a deeper underlying meaning functioning here that Schumann would have understood quite well.

Stalling's embrace of trait 2—undoubtedly manifested less cryptically and intimately than Schumann's—is probably best understood by considering it alongside that of trait 3: the quotation of thematic material from previous compositions in new ones. Stalling's employment of concealed meaning and his use of quotation are most commonly accomplished simultaneously. This can be seen clearly by examining material from Stalling's score for the short *A Bear for Punishment* (1951).

[72] Kaminsky, 210

This is a short centered around Ma Bear, Pa Bear, and Junyer Bear, characters based on the popular fairy tale *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. This family of bears shows up in additional Warner Bros. shorts (namely *Bugs Bunny and The Three Bears*, released in 1944), but this is the final short produced that includes the three characters. The plot revolves around Pa Bear and his disdain for Father's Day. In his musical accompaniment, Stalling uses quotations from old popular songs along with one tune that much of the public would have known the lyrics to. These songs are *That Wonderful Mother of Mine* by Walter Goodwin and Clyde Hager (1918), *What's the Matter With Father* by Harry Williams and Egbert Van Alstyne (1910), and *A Cup Of Coffee, A Sandwich, And You* by Billy Rose, Al Dubin, and Joseph Meyer (1925). I connect this example with traits 2 and 3 because the first two quotations are not likely to have been caught by Stalling's audience (thus the concealed meaning), and he would probably have known this considering how old the songs were when the short was released and how quickly the quotations come and go in the score. The quotation of *That Wonderful Mother of Mine* comes near the beginning of the short, when Ma speaks the line "But Henry. . ." after Pa Bear stuffs an alarm clock in Junyer's face. Ma Bear is an absolute stereotype of the prosaic, depressed, always-in-her-pajamas housewife. Stalling's choice is likely intended to be an ironic sub-gag—ironic due to the nature of the song's lyrics, which contain the likes of "but there's none can compare to my mother's smile." The quotation lasts for all of three seconds before it is interrupted by Pa's outburst of "Well, what do you want?" Ma replies "It's Father's Day, dear," and as she does, we find the first statement of *What's The Matter With Father*. As it turns out, this song becomes something of a motivic backbone for much of Stalling's original music in the short, and

he quotes it again (in different tonalities and with different affects) multiple times throughout the score. The payoff of this musical sub-gag comes in multiple layers. Obviously, we have the surface layer of meaning—a song title suitable for a father with an anger management problem—but there is a far more ironic meaning on display when the lyrics of the song are examined. The lyrics speak of "what's the matter with Father, he's alright" not in the sense of "what's wrong with him," rather in a way that suggests the question "why do you have a problem with him, he's an alright guy?" His abusive, anger management issues thereby become somewhat rationalized with an equally stereotypical implication of "it's not really his fault, it's his depressed wife and simpleton kid that push him to act out." Thus, Stalling appears to have added a slightly more pregnant social subtext to otherwise trivial characters, which would have essentially remained hidden from his audience.

Stalling does not risk too much seriousness in his musical subtext, however, as shortly after these first two quotations come and go, he quotes a third song with a much more comedic sense of irony. As Ma and Junyer decide to serve Pa breakfast in bed, Junyer, running with the tray of food, trips on a roller skate, and the tray flies through the air, landing all over Pa. With his head poking through the tray, Pa Bear suddenly becomes one of the items of food on the tray intended for consumption, and Stalling quotes the then-well-known song *A Cup Of Coffee, A Sandwich, And You*. The irony exists in that the original lyric is obviously intended to mean "a cup of coffee, a sandwich, and *your company*," but in this instance, it takes on a much more cannibalistic

meaning. It's a very clever sub-gag, and one that Stalling would use more than once over the course of his compositional career.[73]

Schumann also combines his use of traits 2 and 3 at times. A similar example can be found in the "Florestan" and "Marche des Davidsbündler" movements of *Carnaval*. Schumann uses quotations from the lyrical theme of movement 1 from *Papillons* as an emotional contrast to "Florestan"'s aggression **(see Fig. 13.1 and Fig. 13.2)**. It is also likely that his choice of quotation here contains a deeper, much more personal meaning. One can only speculate that by contrasting "Florestan" (Schumann's aggressive side) with *Papillons*, which can be seen to represent transcendence and metamorphosis,[74] Schumann was painting a picture of an internal struggle and a desire to rise above it.[75]

Another unusual element of Schumann's musical borrowing can be found in the "Chopin" and "Paganini" movements of *Carnaval*. These movements are better understood as parodies of the styles of the respective composers rather than direct quotations. The Chopin parody is especially accurate in its ability to capture the aura, texture, and distinct style of the beloved composer, with its singing melody and flowing, accompanimental bass.[76]

The final quotation I wish to discuss from *Carnaval* consists of material not originally composed by Schumann: *Der Grossvater Tanz*, which is a traditional German

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[73] Goldmark, 25

[74] Jensen, 136: "Like Jean Paul, Schumann associated the metamorphosis of the butterfly with the attainment of a higher or purer ideal."

[75] Peter F. Ostwald, "Florestan, Eusebius, Clara, and Schumann's Right Hand," *19th-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 17-31.

[76] As a small side note concerning the musical or stylistic borrowing from Chopin in *Carnaval*, it is highly possible that the opening figure of "Coquette," which appears again throughout "Réplique," is a reworking of m. 88 from Chopin's *Variations Brilliantes*, op. 12, which preceded *Carnaval* by a year or so. *Variations Brilliantes* was composed in 1833, and Carnaval was written between 1834 and 1835, so Schumann could possibly have been familiar with the work.

Fig. 13.1. Measures 11-21 of "Florestan" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.

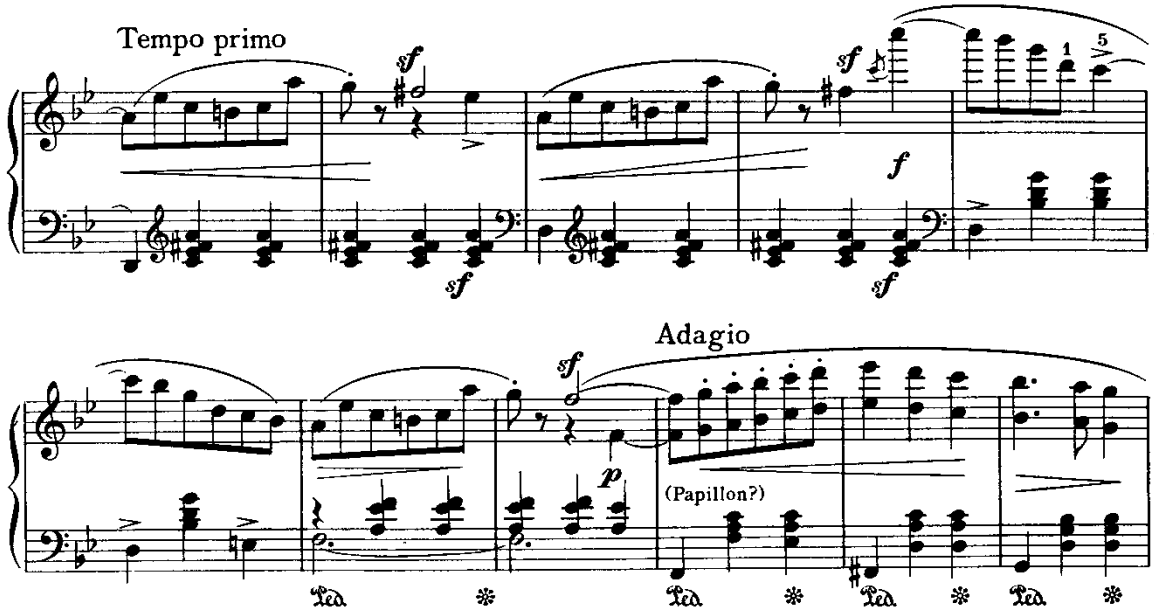
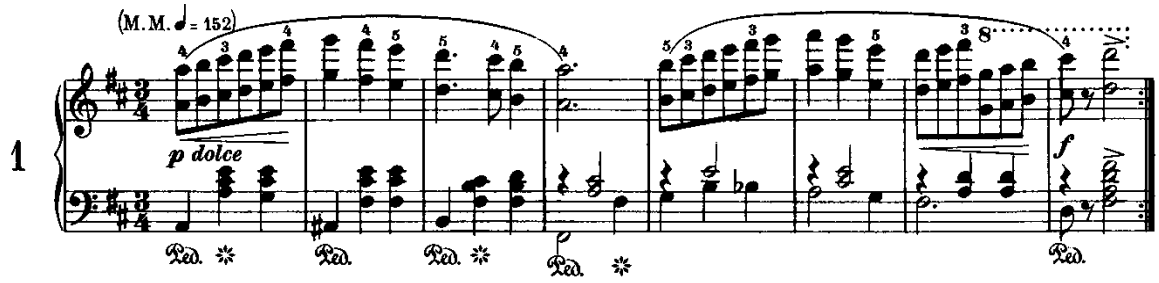


Fig. 13.2. Measures 1-8 of Movement 1 from Schumann's *Papillons*.



melody **(see Fig. 14.1 and Fig. 14.2)**. This tune appears in the final movement, entitled "March des 'Davidsbündler' contre les Philistins," and it also shows up in the final movement of *Papillons*. In the case of *Papillons*, its appearance is intended to mirror the last scene of *Flegeljahre*, where one of the key characters of the plot, Vult, leaves the

Fig. 14.1. Measures 53-59 of "Marche des 'Davidsbündler' contre les Philistins" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.

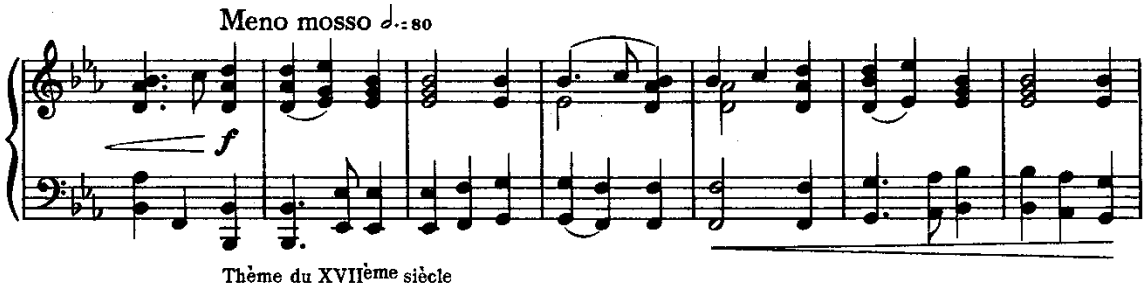
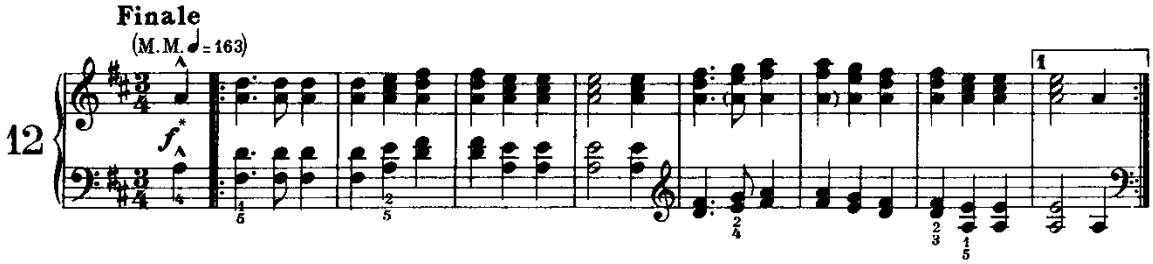


Fig. 14.2. Measures 1-8 of Movement 12 from Schumann's *Papillons*.



masquerade after realizing that the woman of his heart, Wina, is actually in love with his brother Walt.

> Traditionally, the "Grossvater Tanz" was performed near the conclusion of wedding festivities. The text describes a grandmother and grandfather transformed and rejuvenated by dance into a youthful bride and groom—transformed, that is, until the arrival of the next day. Schumann has quoted the melody as a commentary (much in the sardonic, self-reflective manner of Vult) on Vult's hopeless predicament. Like the grandfather, Vult's wishful transformation to a youthful bridegroom is displaced by his encounter with Reality: Wina's true feelings.[77]

Obviously, this type of narrative-driven quotation very closely resembles the manner of quotation that Stalling was using a hundred years later.

[77] Jensen, 141

The concluding trait to discuss in this chapter is trait 4—the often abrupt juxtaposition of grotesque humor with elements of profound sentiment. Schumann's implementation of this trait is most apparent by zooming back out on the large-scale formal construction of character pieces like *Carnaval* and viewing relevant sections alongside similar structural decisions made by Stalling.

One of the clearest examples of abrupt juxtapositions of humorous and sentimental musical material in the work of Schumann can be seen by isolating the three movements from "Paganini" to "Promenade" in *Carnaval*. Here, we begin with intense, almost comical virtuosity brought on by the out-of-sync motion of the left hand and right hand leaps **(see Fig. 15.1 through Fig. 15.3)**. This dramatic section is followed by a reprise of the much slower and calmer "Valse Allemande," which also includes an element of comedy due to the missing downbeats in the bass. This is followed by what may be the most peaceful and sweet movement of the cycle in "Aveu." The title of this movement paints the picture of a sincere and humble confession of love—almost a voyeuristic view into one of the treasured, sweet moments of a loving relationship. The picture is quickly broken up, however, as "Aveu" is the shortest movement of the cycle at a mere twelve measures. "Promenade" follows as a frivolous and—in contrast to "Aveu"—almost trivial Viennese-style waltz.

These three movements are performed in about three to four minutes total, and they are strikingly different from one another in their overall affects, yet they are positioned alongside each other without transitional, buffer material. One way in which Schumann makes this emotional juxtaposition so effective is through his use of the most

Fig. 15.1. Measures 1-4 of "Paganini" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.

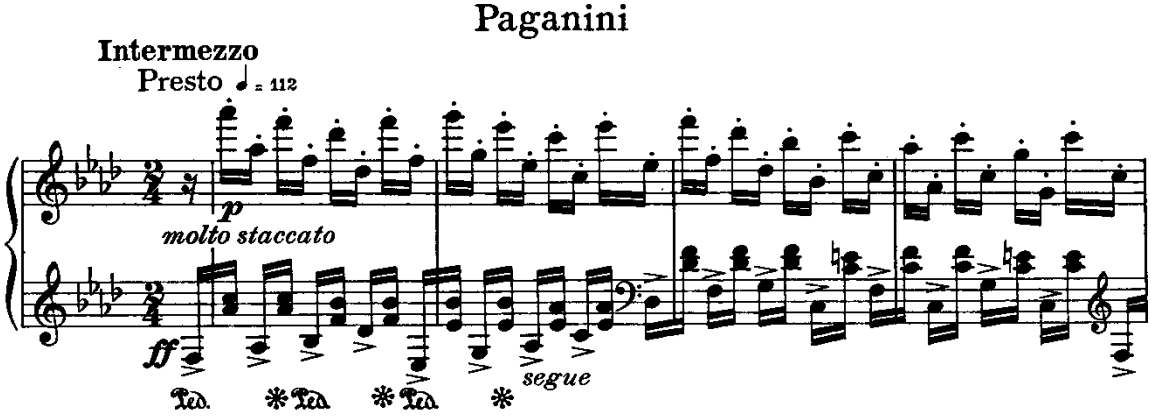


Fig. 15.2. Measures 1-4 of "Aveu" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.

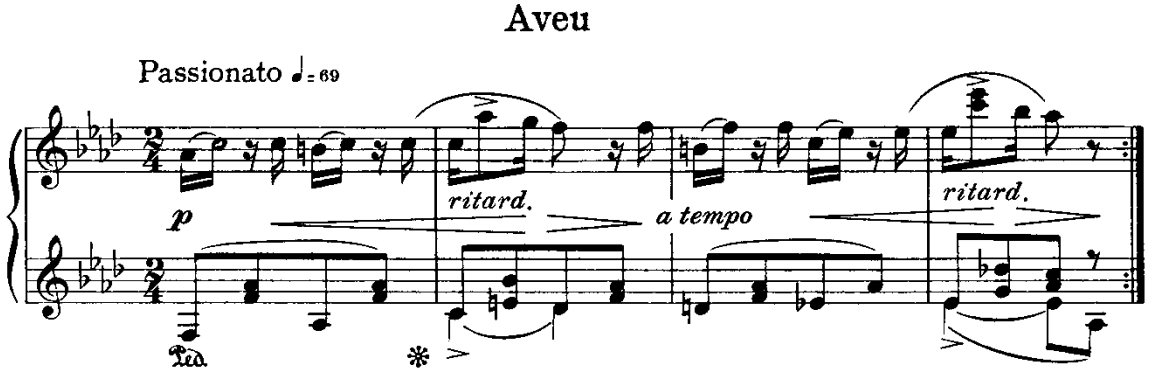
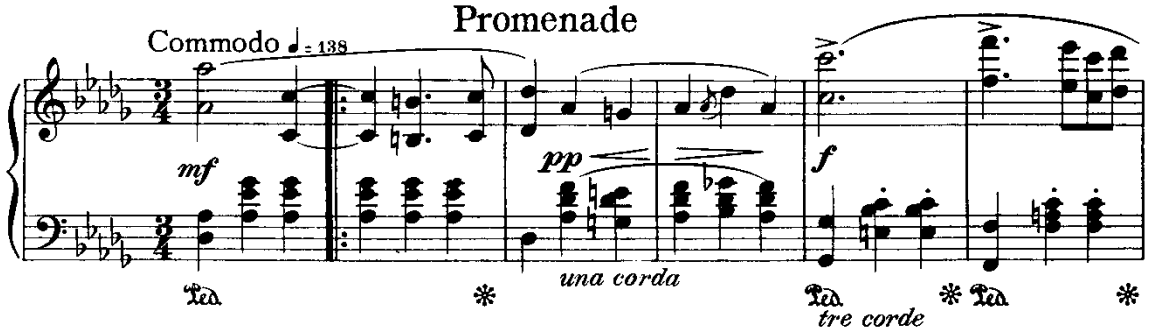


Fig. 15.3. Measures 1-6 of "Promenade" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.



popular dance genre of the time, the waltz, as it contrasts with sections latent with more depth.

> [*Carnaval*] had originated as a series of variations on Schubert's *Sehnsuchtswalzer*, developing later into a motivically unified chain of short pieces. Thus, the genesis of *Carnaval* suggests a quasi-Romantic mixture of genres.[78]

This mixture of genres, particularly those packed so closely together as they are in *Carnaval*, was truly irregular and eccentric for Schumann's time, which is likely one of the reasons that reportedly compelled Fredrick Chopin, whom Schumann admired greatly, to claim that *Carnaval* is "not music at all."[79]

A similar juxtaposition of sentiment and comedy can be seen on the small-scale structure of *Carnaval* as well. The movement "Pierrot" highlights this rather clearly **(see Fig. 16)**. Here we find a very quiet, very mysterious, and frightened sounding chromatic phrase. The tonality of the phrase is functionally ambiguous—even when it is interrupted by the obnoxious and trivializing E-flat, C, B-flat, played at a forte dynamic and in unison between both hands (m. 3-4). The anxious phrase takes over again directly after the interruption, inverted this time, only to be disrupted and mocked again by the same E-flat, C, B-flat culprit. The piece continues on like this, back and forth, until the instigator prevails in dramatic fashion, at which point we realize that the piece was in E-flat all along, and the pesky B-flat was its dominant.

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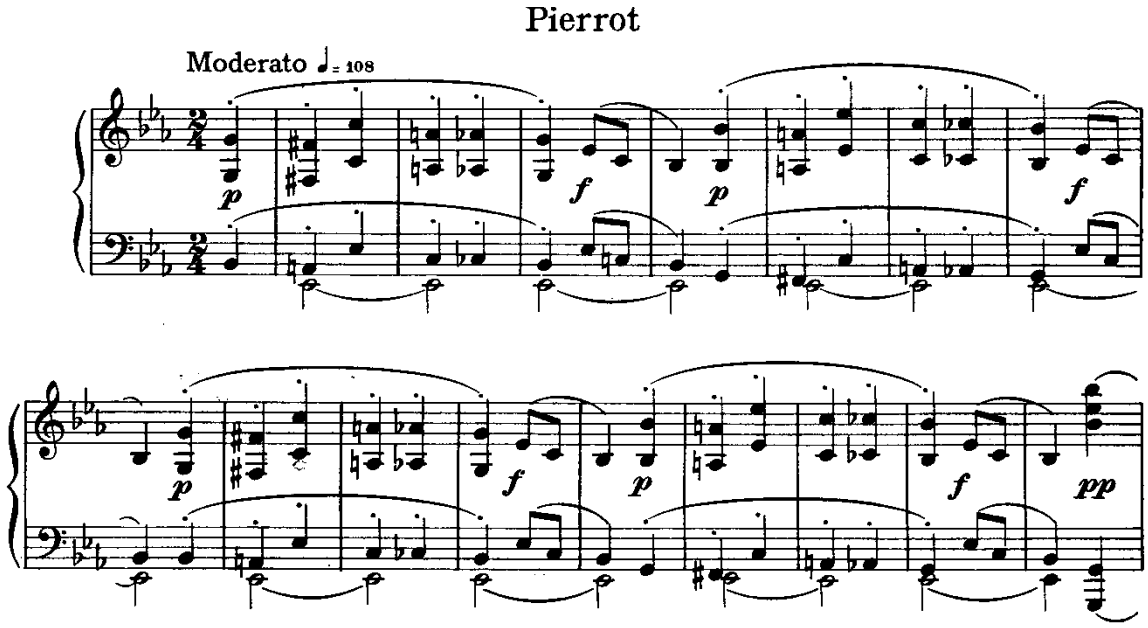
[78] Reiman, 76

[79] Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as Man and Musician* (Charleston, SC: Bibliolife, 2008), 2:147: "[Composer Stephen] Heller was asked by [publisher Maurice] Schlesinger whether he would advise him to publish Schumann's 'Carnaval.' Heller answered that it would be a good speculation, for although the work would probably not sell well at first, it was sure to pay in the long run. Thereupon Schlesinger confided to Heller what Chopin had told him—namely, that the 'Carnaval' was not music at all."

Fig. 16. Measures 1-16 of "Pierrot" from Schumann's *Carnaval*.



At this point, it hardly seems necessary to demonstrate Stalling's embrace of trait 4, as this aspect of his compositional style can be seen in almost all of the examples of his music highlighted thus far. I do wish, however, to take a brief moment to bring attention to the more sentimental side of Stalling (a side not readily found in his later work for Warner Bros.) as it contrasts with more grotesque comedic elements. For this purpose, I turn to a short that Stalling worked on in 1932, between his two stints at Ub Iwerks's studio. This short is entitled *The Snowman*, and it is one of the very first color cartoons ever created (two-strip Technicolor). The cartoon was directed and independently released by Ted Eshbaugh before he went on to direct for Van Beuren Studios a year later.[80] I happened upon the score for this remarkable short (the title *Color Fantasy* is given in the score) in the University of Wyoming's Stalling collection, and due to

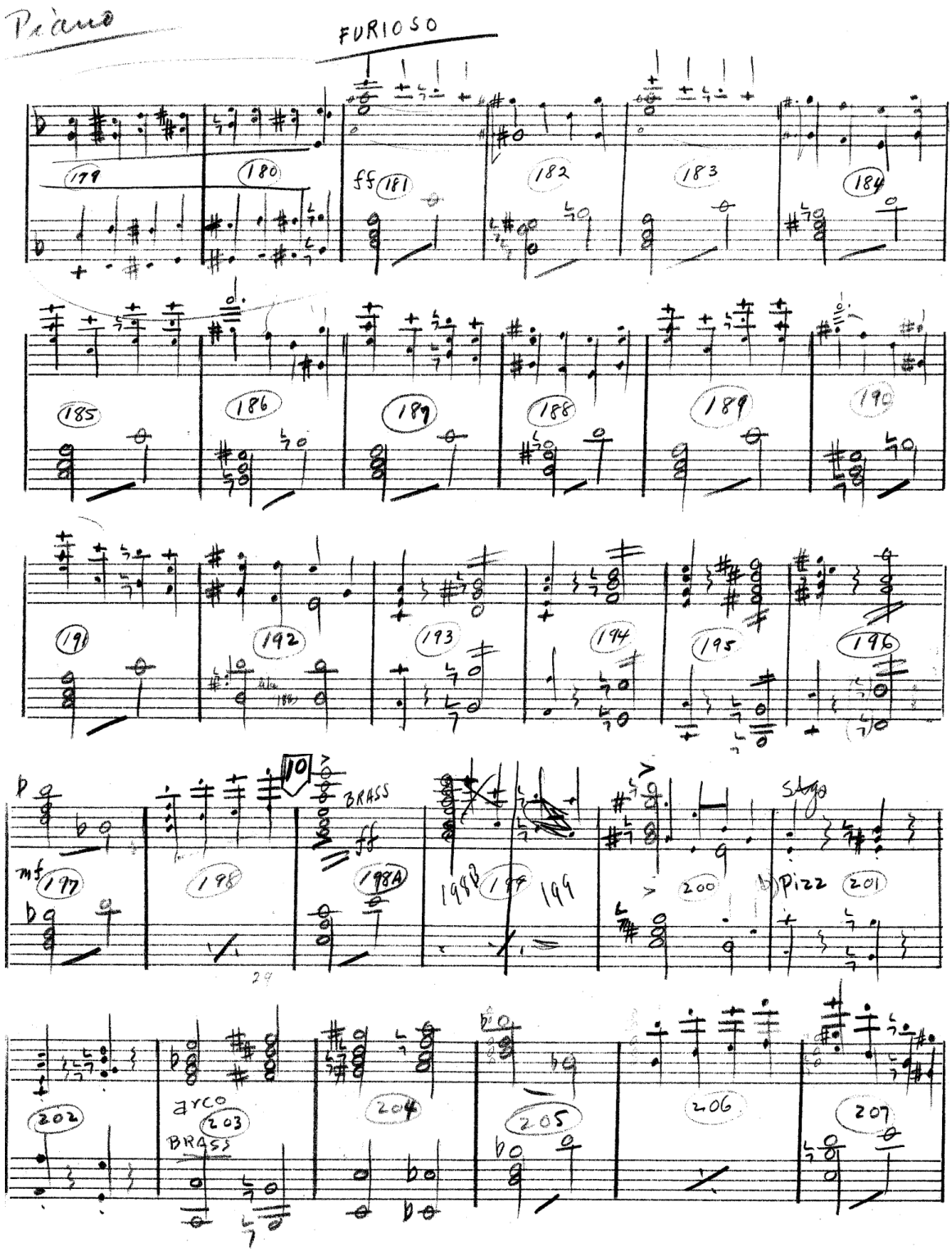
[80] Maltin, 204

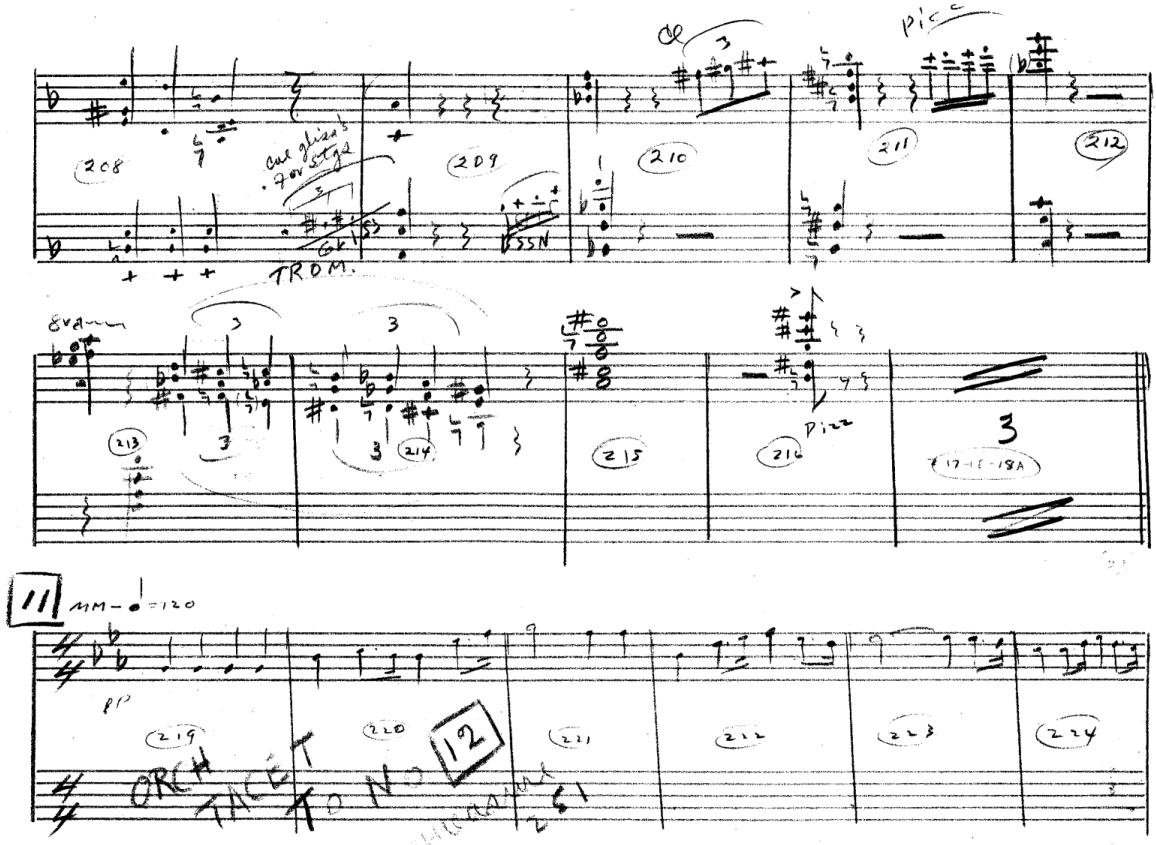
markings about seals, Eskimos, and snowmen found in the performance score for the percussion, I was able to deduce that this was actually Stalling's score for *The Snowman*.[81]

This is a short about a little Eskimo boy who builds a snowman with his animal friends. The snowman magically comes to life in a devilish way and attempts to eat the boy and his adorable companions. The section I would like to look at is found between measures 179 and 224 in the score **(see Fig. 17)**. At this point in the short, the snowman has just come to life—he is part grotesquely comedic and part genuinely scary—and he begins breaking igloos and chasing the animals. The music is marked "furioso," as big chords and strong dynamics aid in creating the intensity found in the section as a whole. The dismay comes to a peak when one of the terrified little animals actually gets eaten by the snowman (m. 213). This bit of horror is abruptly cut silent, however, and taken over by the sound of a choir singing a hymn by the name of *The Little Brown Church in the Vale*. Seeking refuge and sanctuary from the evil they created, the little critters congregate in an icy church and sing "no spot is so dear to my childhood as the little brown church in the vale." The juxtaposition of evil and virtue found in these two sections of the score actually provides for a very heart-warming moment. This is Stalling at his most sentimental self, and the effect of the emotional contrast he helps create is clearly felt, which in turn assists the audience in forming an emotional connection to the poor, hymn-singing little animals.

[81] Through personal correspondence with Daniel Goldmark and Leonard Maltin—who himself checked the U.S. Copyright Catalog with the hope of finding possible credits for the short (to no avail)—it appears as though Stalling's creation of the score to *The Snowman* has gone uncredited until now. The score is definitely in Stalling's hand, and it is absolutely the music for this particular Eshbaugh short. Stalling worked with Eshbaugh at least once more over the period of a year, composing the music for the cartoon short, *The Wizard of Oz* (1933).

Fig. 17. Measures 179-224 of Stalling's sketch for *The Snowman*.





A similar juxtaposition—this time between "good" (classical) and "evil" (jazz) musical genres—can be seen after the snowman breaks down the church and defiles the pipe organ with a bit of mockery. The victim of his lampoon, in this case, is classical music. The snowman sits down at the organ, slicks back his flowing hair in order to look more like Franz Liszt, then plays the opening bars of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, op. 13. After each phrase, his posture changes to that of a stereotypical jazz pianist, and he looks at the "camera" while doing his best Jimmy Durante impression ("ha-cha, ha-cha, ha-cha"). Obviously, no music is sacred in the hands of Carl Stalling, even inside a church.

Despite what sometimes seems to be a personal vendetta against classical culture, and despite his frequent mockery and distortion of works dubbed "artistically valuable," Stalling would not be able to escape the fact that his own music would eventually be seen as valuable in ironically similar ways. In fact, the more irreverently he treated classical music by throwing it into a blender and mixing it up with other "more lowly" genres of music and pop culture, the more fascinating his work became. Robert Schumann was purposefully disregarding structural and musical paradigms of high art a hundred years before him, but Stalling brought those techniques to new, even postmodern, heights.

Chapter 5

Stalling's Influence on John Zorn and Postmodernism

Charles Ives and Stalling's Cartoon Cocoon

One of the true tragedies quickly encountered in researching the life and music of Carl Stalling is the shockingly limited amount of material from which to draw. Considering the fact that he composed well into the latter half of the 1950s, it is incredible how few biographical materials, interviews, journals, musical scores, sketches, or notes have survived. If we can glean anything from the shortage of interviews and from Warner Bros.'s lack of foresight in disposing of most of Stalling's scores,[82] it is that the genius of Stalling's work was not fully appreciated during his lifetime. The music and animation communities owe a great debt to the thoughtfulness of Mike Barrier who, with

[82] See footnote 64 on p. 39.

the aid of Milton Gray and Bill Spicer, conducted what is believed to be the only substantial interview of Stalling that survives. This interview, which took place shortly before his death in 1972, is essentially the only first-hand information on Stalling's life and career that is available to scholars. Of the topics covered in the interview, an especially high percentage deals with his early years at Disney. While the work he did at Disney from 1928 to 1930 was of high quality and great historical significance, these two years and the nineteen shorts that Stalling worked on during this relatively brief stint represent but a tiny fraction of his overall compositional output. Consequently, there are still many holes yet to be filled in.

One such hole would be the lack of a clear understanding of how Stalling viewed himself as a composer. Taking into account an excerpt from the Barrier/Gray/Spicer interview, it seems likely that Stalling may have seen himself exactly how the general public has since 1928, as a mere tradesman rather than an artist.[83]

> Gray:
> They were making four cartoons every five weeks at Warner's back in the Forties, so you had to turn out almost one complete score every week. How did you turn out so much work?
>
> Stalling:
> We had an arranger, of course. I would write the piano part—the basic skeleton parts, you might say—and jot down all the cues and everything then send it to the arranger, who worked at home. He arranged the music for orchestra, but whenever I wanted to feature an instrument or instruments in the orchestra, I'd make a notation. It took about a week, maybe eight days for me to prepare each score.
>
> Barrier:
> Did you ever get really pressed for time?
>
> Stalling:
> No, I had that schedule, and I stayed on time, although I sometimes had to do homework in the evenings.[84]

[83] Goldmark and Taylor, 264
[84] Goldmark and Taylor, 50

Here, Stalling speaks of his trade in much the same way that most any essential, full-time employee of a major corporation would, as an important cog in a well-oiled machine. This is likely not the language of a man who viewed himself as worthy of a place in the discussion on notable composers of the twentieth century. The collaborative aspects of Stalling's music alone (namely his delegation of orchestral arranging to Milt Franklyn and sound effects to Treg Brown) suggest little internal desire to establish a place for himself in music history, necessarily prioritizing logistical efficiency over full artistic control. Instead, they speak of a man doing his part to accomplish a job and make a living. This is not to suggest that Stalling did not care about the quality of his work—quite the contrary in fact—but to underscore his relative separation from the world of the "serious" composer and his freedom from the complicated trappings associated with "serious" music. The little cocoon that was Stalling's office in the Warner Bros. studios was operating in a musical world almost entirely its own—one that did not follow the rules of classical tradition, one that did not seek the respect or attention of peers, and one that did not expect to be remembered very long after the laughs it helped generate had faded.

The creative bubble in which Stalling was able to achieve musical innovation is reminiscent of the musical cocoon Charles Ives was composing in during the late 1890s through the first few decades of the twentieth century. Ives is generally considered one of the first truly great American composers, and many of his compositional techniques were well before their time. His music was given minimal attention during his lifetime, and like Stalling, he garnered very little respect as a composer until well after his death. Ives forewent the route of most American composers of the day—that of going to Europe to

receive training from conservatories steeped in Austro-German tradition—choosing instead to study composition at Yale. Shortly after graduating, he decided against a career in music, favoring a more predictable income in the insurance industry instead.[85] Because of the financial independence this allowed him, Ives's compositional output was never dictated by a need for patronage, and he was able to compose with relatively complete artistic freedom—a rare situation as great composers go. Thus, Ives composed mainly for himself, almost totally isolated from the rest of the music world, and his work was rarely played.[86] This type of artistic seclusion helped breed what became some of the most radical experimentation by any composer writing during those decades. Similar to Stalling's outlook, Ives's view of music as an unconstrained art was revolutionary: few things were faux-pas, musical borrowing was artistically valid, no style of music was superior to another, and full-out tonality could exist alongside (and sometimes within) chaotic dissonance. These were wildly forward-thinking notions for the years surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. Many of Ives's works even include quotations from popular tunes and marches, which were often juxtaposed with intense dissonance, creating emotional narratives through layers of contrast and meaning.

As previously demonstrated, these are characteristics shared by Stalling's theater-inspired style of composition, and I briefly point to Ives as a model of the compositional cocoon and of the innovation that can emerge from such isolation from tradition. Stalling and Ives were making similar innovations and breaks from traditional thought—though their musical voices and outputs differed greatly—and they were doing so as near-

[85] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 139.
[86] Morgan, 148

contemporaries (Stalling began improvising in theaters while Ives was writing his Piano Sonata No. 1).[87] This is not to suggest that Stalling's music will ever receive the kind of respect or attention that Ives's music now deservedly enjoys (though I hope one day it will)—due mainly to the fact that Ives was writing great concert symphonies and sonatas, while Stalling was writing "lowly" cartoon music—but the parallels are exceptionally close and warrant comparison. Though their situations in life were vastly different, as were their compositional motivations, Stalling's and Ives's individual cocoons facilitated a rebelliousness that was free from (if not outright defiant of) the baggage of European convention and the confines of critical and institutional approval.

There are a couple of questions that deserve to be asked here. If Stalling considered himself a type of tradesman and a cog in the Warner Bros. machine, can his music really be considered rebellious? And is it blasphemous to compare Stalling to Ives or Schumann, giving him credit for a similar brand of musical unruliness when much of Stalling's so-called rebelliousness stems from the influences of a completely different set of traditions (those of theater and film)? I believe answers to these questions lie in my chapter on Stalling's musical education. While he was partially a product of the traditions of film music and theater improvisation, we must not forget that he was simultaneously a product of the traditional music conservatory. There is no doubt that Stalling would have completely understood the differences and conflicts between theater tradition and the classical conventions he was trained to respect, and it is for this very reason—the conscious brazenness of his choice to embrace the former over the latter (often intentionally skewering the latter for its snobbery in the process)—that he deserves full

[87] Goldmark and Taylor, 264

credit for being the pioneer that he was. Intent matters when determining greatness. He may not have intended for his music to be performed in a concert hall, but he certainly intended to break from and even defile the music of his youth with the very tools it helped him hone. He was fully aware that his style of deliberately notated theater improvisation and collage went against the grain (increasingly so in his post-Disney years), but he was an outsider by choice, unbound by conventional rules, and his cartoon cocoon acted as a shelter against the negative critical reaction that often plagues innovators. Stalling's opinions of himself as a composer (unclear though those are) should be seen as irrelevant to the discussion regarding his place in music history. His work speaks for itself. His freedom to write what he wanted was facilitated in part by a rare combination of brilliant pioneering and personal humility—by his desire to create something new within his own bubble and his lack of a need to seek praise for those musical innovations outside of that bubble. Laughter was all the praise Stalling needed, and by that metric, he was richly rewarded throughout his career.

Postmodernism

> Postmodernism is a maddeningly imprecise musical concept. Does the term refer to a period or an aesthetic, a listening attitude or a compositional practice? Is postmodern music still seeking to define itself, or has its time already passed? Does postmodernism react against or continue the project of modernist music? Is it a positive or a negative force? Is postmodern music original, or does it recycle older music? How widespread is it?[88]

As can be seen by the opening paragraph from Jonathan Kramer's clear and enlightening article on the subject, "postmodernism" is an extremely difficult, if not

[88] Jonathan D. Kramer, "The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism," *Current Musicology* 66 (Spring 1999), 7.

impossible, thing to define. Unlike more easily categorized musical movements of the twentieth century—e.g., serialism, minimalism, impressionism, neoclassicism—postmodernism is much more broad and nebulous in nature. Simply put, the term refers to music that moves past the modernist movement most easily associated with, but certainly not limited to, Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School of serialist composers. A postmodern philosophy asserts that modernism, in rebelling against the conventions of the past, dismantled them only to replace the wreckage with an entirely new and equally confining set of conventions—be those new tonal or harmonic conventions, new structural or compositional conventions, or even the mere outlook that new music is regressive or lesser if it is not somehow divorced from the past (either tonally, formally, or by any number of other means). It would be misleading, however, to say that postmodernism is a reaction against modernism because postmodernism is inclusive in its treatment of music rather than exclusive. It is by no means philosophically opposed to the compositional techniques or sonorities of modernist music but rather to its treatment of the past as an archaic relic. Postmodernism also refuses the notion that any one genre or style of music is superior to another—be it modernist, Baroque, jazz, popular, or ethnic folk music—and treats all equally. In a sense, the postmodern movement attempts to emancipate music from any form of convention or prejudice in a way similar to the attempts by modernist composers to emancipate music from tonality and traditional musical thought.

Kramer's article seeks to form a list of specific qualities often associated with music dubbed "postmodern," which is helpful to a degree,[89] but there is irony inherent in

[89] Kramer, 10-11

such a list, as postmodernism's immunity to labels is in fact its only possible label. Therefore, I will refrain from attempting to prove why Carl Stalling's music can be seen as postmodern but instead focus on why Stalling as a composer should be given credit for being one of the very first to embrace a postmodern musical aesthetic. The most effective way of doing so will be by viewing him alongside a composer who has become something of a poster-boy for postmodernism: John Zorn.

John Zorn and Postmodernism

> [The] next best thing to those Indian Head test patterns were Warner Bros.' MERRIE MELODIES. As I got older (and started getting paid to scream), like many other hard core Stalling freaks, I treasured my tapes of Stalling's Road Runner scores dubbed straight off the TV.
>
> Separating his music from the images it was created to support, it becomes clear that Stalling was one of the most revolutionary visionaries in American music—especially in his conception of time. In following the visual logic of screen action rather than the traditional rules of musical form (development, theme and variations, etc.), Stalling created a radical compositional arc unprecedented in the history of music. On first hearing, Stalling's immense musical talents are immediately apparent, and certainly all these basic musical elements are there—but they are broken into shards: a constantly changing kaleidoscope of styles, forms, melodies, quotations, and of course the "Mickey Mousing". . .
>
> Set against the historical happenings in American music in the 30's and 40's, Stalling's achievements become even more impressive. Copland's pan-tonality; Cage beginning to explore the sonic possibilities of the prepared piano with quiet, Satie-inspired music; Partch freaking out and building his own instruments based on his own 46-tone tuning theories; Ellington balancing improvisation and composition with his swinging harmonically lush big band; the beginning of a new music by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie; Varese basically in retirement—it was a period of basically conservative American impressionism invaded by the search for new sonic resources.
>
> Stalling was easily one of the most extreme composers of the period. A maverick who brought us to a new all-encompassing universe filled with a humor ranging from the subtlest musical reference to side-splitting slapstick. No musical style seemed beyond his reach—and his willingness to include them, any and all, whenever necessary (and <u>never</u> gratuitously, I might add) implies an openness—a non-hierarchical musical overview—typical of today's younger composers, but all too rare before the mid-1960's. All genres of music are <u>equal</u>—no <u>one</u> is inherently better than the other—and with Stalling, all are embraced, chewed up

> and spit out in a format closer to Burroughs' cut ups, or Godard's film editing of the 60's, than to anything happening in the 40's.[90]

John Zorn's words perfectly get to the very heart of this examination of Carl Stalling and his music. They form something of a cornerstone for my assertion that Stalling's music warrants the academic analysis this paper employs, and they attest to the fact that Stalling deserves more widespread acknowledgment for his role as one of the first pioneers of postmodern musical practice.

In college, Zorn (born in 1953) "became interested in what he refers to as 'block structures'—sudden changes in texture and style—which developed through his study of Ives, Xenakis, Stravinsky, Stockhausen, and most importantly, cartoon soundtracks."[91] He cut his compositional training short at Webster College[92] due to disappointments with institutionalized education.[93] In 1975, he made his way back to his native New York, and he has been composing and performing as a part of the city's eclectic "downtown scene" ever since. One of the few constants in his music over the years has been change itself.[94] Zorn has had a hand in everything from experimental jazz (he is a saxophonist), to works inspired by Jewish culture, to collage-style pieces, and game theory pieces.[95]

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[90] Zorn, *The Carl Stalling Project*

[91] Adam J. Kolek, "Noise, Form, and Cartoon Music: Perceptual Structure in John Zorn's 'Speedfreaks,'" *Music Research Forum* 24, no. 9 (2009), 26.

[92] During his time at Webster College, Zorn actually began working on a thesis centered on Carl Stalling. As research on Stalling is extremely sparse, it is a true shame that this project was never realized.

[93] Paulo J. Almeida, "Organized Improvisation by Three Downtown Composers in 1980s New York" (master's thesis, California State University-Fullerton, 2008), 44.

[94] Zachary Woolfe, "To Get to City Opera, Mr. Downtown Practiced Eclecticism," *New York Times*, March 20, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/20/arts/music/john-zorns-machine-de-letre-and-city-opera.html.

[95] Game theory is one of Zorn's most important contributions to music, and in game pieces like *Cobra*, the performers follow a particular set of rules (as in a game) and the outcome of the music is completely different each time. The performers literally have no idea what they are going to be playing before the piece begins.

Because of the disparate nature of Zorn's body of work, scholars have had some difficulty understanding who he is as a composer, and a degree of aimlessness often sets in where appropriate labels do not exist. For example, in response to one of Kramer's listed elements associated with postmodernism—"disdain for. . .structural unity"[96]—John Brackett, in his book on Zorn, points out that Zorn's music is by no means devoid of elements of unity, calling into question the wisdom in linking him to postmodernism.[97] This would be a reasonable argument were it not for the irony of Kramer's list to begin with. While many pieces associated with postmodernism absolutely lack elements of unity (in the traditional sense of the word), the inclusive nature of postmodernism simultaneously allows for a disdain of unity and rejects a prejudice against its use. In other words, an artistic choice to refrain from embracing a particular compositional option is itself a valid compositional option, but a prejudice against that option, and a rejection of its validity as an option, is not. This idea should be taken into account when discussing Zorn and his ever-changing, never-prejudiced body of work. The general lack of unity in his eclectic compositional output combined with the unifying constants of change and musical indiscrimination—as well as the near-impossibility of placing his music into any available nutshell—actually substantiate the assertion that his music is in fact the quintessential example of postmodern art.

That being said, the pieces within Zorn's oeuvre that are of most relevance to this paper are his collage-style pieces, which are most easily associated with postmodernism and relate particularly closely to Stalling's cartoon music. In discussing his own collage

[96] Kramer, 10
[97] John Brackett, *John Zorn: Tradition and Transgression* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), xiii.

music, Zorn says "there's a wit there, there's something not European, not weighted down with centuries of history."[98] To underscore this, I will take a close look at the piano piece *Carny*, which is a terrific example of Zorn's juxtaposition of "block structures," with the intent of viewing it alongside a structural map of Stalling's cues for the brilliant short *The Old Grey Hare* (1944).

Carny

Carny was written in 1989 and revised by Zorn in 1996. The piece is about thirteen minutes in length, and its difficulty requires nothing short of a mastery of piano technique. Maybe the clearest way to describe the piece is by referring to it as musically carnivorous (the title of the work may be a partial implication of the same). Zorn snatches quotations and pseudo-quotations from countless sources spanning music history, positions them on the score together, and then forces them to interact with one another. Sometimes these diverse bits of music complement each other, and at other times, all-out violence erupts.

There are distinct challenges extant in making sense of this musical chaos, and the challenges grow exponentially when attempting to create an academic analysis of the work. Pianist Stephen Drury—to whom Zorn dedicated the piece—and Tom Service have both written specifically about *Carny*, and both men (along with the composer himself [99]) posit that the piece calls for a "new game of analysis." As there is very little material or structural unity within the piece, traditional analytical methods can essentially be

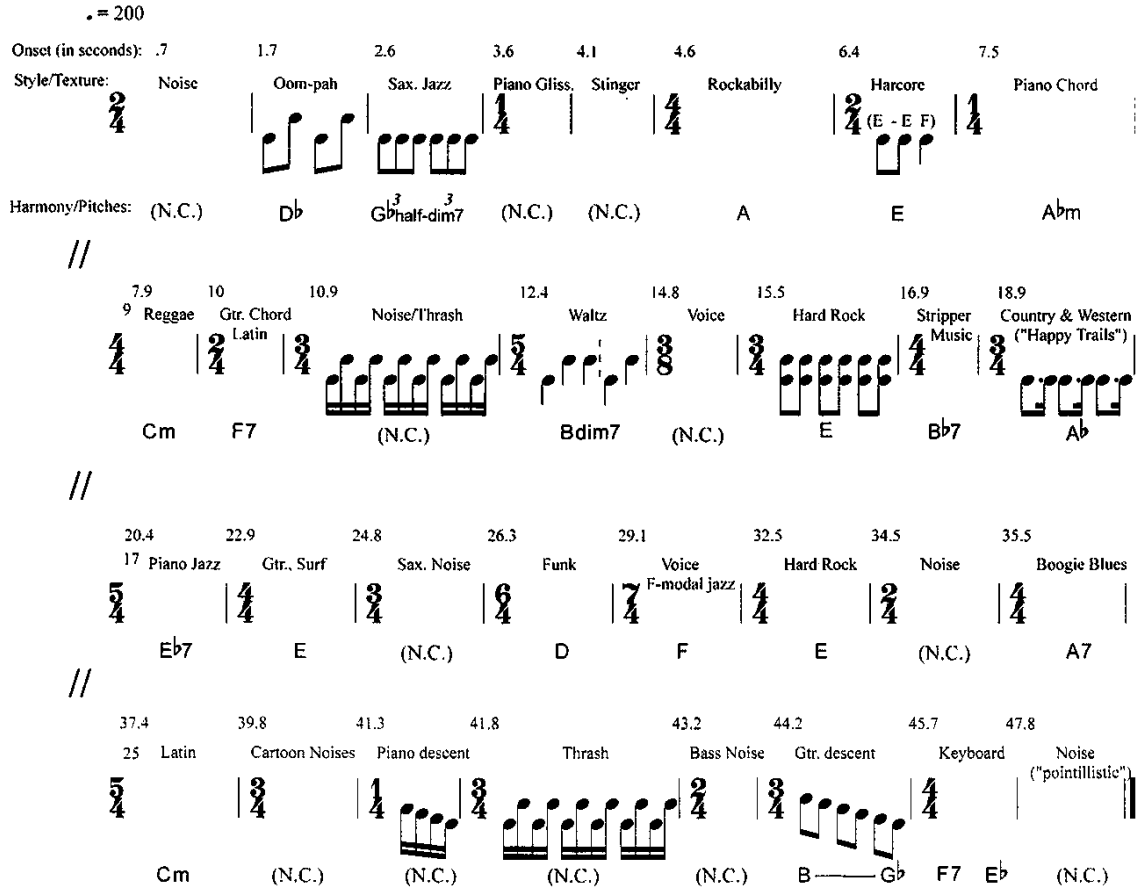
[98] Goldmark and Taylor, 267
[99] Tom Anderson Service, "Playing a New Game of Analysis: John Zorn's *Carny*, Autonomy and Postmodernism," *BPM Online* 5 (June 2002), www.bpmonline.org.uk/bpm5-playing.html.

scrapped. The real task then is in finding something to replace them with. Fortunately, there is some degree of basic precedent for such an analysis.

John Brackett and Adam Kolek both offer analytical maps of "Speedfreaks" from Zorn's 1989 album, *Torture Garden*. The sound of this piece is often compared to the audible experience of "channel surfing" in front of a television, with its quick cuts from style to style.[100] Kolek's map is generally based on Brackett's, and as the juxtapositions in *Carny* function very similarly to those found in "Speedfreaks," Brackett's map should be considered a good point of departure **(see Fig. 18)**.[101] As is evident from a glance, the map—which Kolek calls "[an] analysis and interpretation of the piece's form"[102]—is essentially a basic walk-through of each musical block in order, with brief descriptions of the sounds found in each (as well as in slight transitions between blocks). However, considering the many layers of chaos and ambiguity that are even more prevalent in *Carny* than in "Speedfreaks," something in the manner of Brackett's "Speedfreaks" map would not fully suffice for a piece like *Carny*, and further probing is called for. Even so, a full exploration of *Carny*'s depths, mysteries, and humor would require a far more extensive analysis than is appropriate for this paper—a worthy endeavor for future study. My goal here is merely to demonstrate how this piece is a clear example of the many ways that Zorn employs the compositional techniques he openly acknowledges stem from his fascination with Stalling's cartoon music, and how Zorn took Stalling's techniques to a new level of complexity.

[100] Kolek, 26
[101] Brackett, 25
[102] Kolek, 29

Fig. 18. John Brackett's map for Zorn's "Speedfreaks."



To begin with, *Carny* is much more than a mere hodgepodge of quotations, block structures, and juxtapositions. The piece calls into question the very ways in which we differentiate between quotation and original material, and it forces us to reexamine what it really means to quote a musical source.[103] Certain shreds of the music are outright quotations, some are slightly distorted pseudo-quotations, some are parodies, some feel vaguely familiar, and others are either original music (assuming something so definable can even exist in a piece like *Carny*) or far too short in length to fall into any of these

[103] Service.

classifications. Because of this ambiguous brand of quotation, attempting to identify quoted sources can be like searching for a hundred needles in a field of haystacks, and this style of analysis is something of a rabbit hole—to say nothing of its potentially limited value.

> [I]t is clear that Zorn is not interested in a "name that tune" game of listening (or, for that matter, analysis). Instead, the close musical and/or extramusical interconnections between earlier works and their new context function in a sort of give-and-take fashion. That is, the newly composed work—Zorn's "own" piece of music—is designated to stand on its own and any quotations or references that are included contribute to the structure of the "new whole."[104]

It becomes clear that the real reward available to those studying *Carny* is found not in uncovering needles from haystacks, but in making sense of the ways in which these seemingly unrelated chunks of music interact with one another—in viewing them in an entirely new environment, completely divorced from their original contexts and meanings. This new context of cross-historical interaction creates something completely its own, whether the original sources of the quotations are recognized by the listener or not. The piece moves from one sound to the next extremely quickly. Just when the ear thinks it catches a possible quotation, it is often gone before the mind has a chance to process what it might have been. The identities of the vast majority of Zorn's quotations—which I like to think of as figurative "characters"—are rarely grasped upon first hearing the piece, but somehow, you still *know* them, and you know what their sounds represent in a historical context. Sometimes these characters show their faces clearly (and you can actually name that tune), and other times the distinctions between multiple identities are more blurred, creating new hybrid characters. This is all part of the game that Zorn plays with the listener. In fact, it is helpful to look at *Carny* as something

[104] Brackett, 119

of a complex game, and Stephen Drury even refers to the piece as "a perfectly written out game piece—like *Cobra*."[105]

While it is true that the quotations don't necessarily need to be identified in order to enjoy the game, some degree of musical knowledge and a few identified "characters" are certainly a bonus when examining *Carny*. In that vein, and for the singular purpose of demonstrating how Zorn uses quotation, I will point out a few of these sources during the course of my analysis.

> Each fragment—quote, genre reference, or abstract—affects the way we hear what follows and what came before. Previously unimaginable connections appear between Mozart and bebop. Stockhausen negates Fats Waller. *Carny*, in its juxtapositions, says difficult things in as simple a manner as possible.[106]

I have chosen to take a closer look at bars 45-94 of *Carny*, which represent about one quarter of the work. This particular section is an especially good example of how the bulk of the piece functions. Before I jump to these bars, however, it is important to begin by briefly mentioning the breadcrumbs Zorn leaves in his 2-bar introduction. Drury points out that this introduction "cannibalizes the rest of the piece"[107] by grabbing seemingly random chords from throughout the work and shuffling them into the opening bars (**Fig. 19** shows where these opening chords can be found in the body of the piece). At first glance, this seems to suggest the functioning of some unifying formal process, but On closer examination, that does not appear to be the case at all.[108] Rather, it is much more likely that, in using these bars as an introductory microcosm, Zorn is demonstrating

[105] Stephen Drury, telephone conversation with the author, April 5, 2011.
[106] Stephen Drury, "A View From the Piano Bench or Playing John Zorn's *Carny* for Fun and Profit," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994): 198
[107] Drury, 199
[108] In fact, Mr. Drury explained to me that the 2-bar introduction was actually added to the beginning of the piece at the very end of Zorn's compositional process.

Fig. 19. Measures 1-2 of *Carny*.

Measure 1:	Chord 7 = m. 170
First four notes = reordered from m. 95	Chord 8 = m. 23
Rolled chord = m. 87	Chord 9 = m. 143
Measure 2:	Chord 10 = m. 13
Chord 1 = m. 90	Chord 11 = m. 53
Chord 2 = m. 61	Chord 12 = m. 64
Chord 3 = m. 126-129	High C-sharp = possibly m. 202
Chords 4-5 = m. 51	Chord 13 = m. 18 or m. 113
Chord 6 = m. 198	Chord 14 = m. 215

to the listener how *Carny* works by doing to his own piece what the piece in general does to music history.[109] My purpose for drawing attention to this introduction is to more fully support my analytical decisions by showing how Zorn's choice to begin the work with a shuffled microcosm or miniature parody of his own piece helps us gain greater insight into what he himself believes to be the foundation and basic identity of *Carny*. Just as this microcosm of *Carny* is comprised of a mishmash of unrecognizable chords ripped from his own quotations of Morton Feldman to jazz, or Aaron Copland to Thelonious Monk and Béla Bartók, we see that the identity of the work as a whole is a combination of its audible surface and the suggestive undertones this musical surface creates. Such a surface of juxtaposed and interacting sounds, dynamics, textures, tempos, rhythmic devices, genres, historical contexts, and recognizability of original source material is what I have

[109] Drury, p.199

chosen to build my analysis on. These elements also happen to be the very things that Zorn finds so fascinating about Stalling's cartoon music. Unifying devices, which may be argued to exist, should be seen as less relevant to the piece and will not be discussed in this paper.

The section of *Carny* spanning bars 45-94 contains a wealth of successive materials to examine. Since an analysis consisting of "this happens and then that happens" can be somewhat limiting without the benefit of a broader context,[110] I have created a structural map of these bars—similar in nature to Brackett's and Kolek's for "Speedfreaks" **(see Fig. 20)**. That said, this map only shows the general structure of the section and lists the basic sounds and quotations of the musical blocks.[111] It should only be viewed as part of my analysis, as taking it for the whole risks greatly underselling the work. With this map as a reference, I now turn to some of the more noteworthy moments of this quarter of the piece, beginning with bars 54-55.

In these bars, we find a great example of the way Zorn joins two diverse "characters" together as something of an experiment on musical interaction. The character in the treble is a 12-tone row that sounds like it could be by Anton Webern. Underneath this, there is a blues line in the bass **(see Fig. 21)**. The metric instability caused by the 12-tone row's quintuplets and the blues line's triplets makes this particular pairing of characters feel very awkward. The row's pointillistic qualities—which give the passage a very foreign sound and feel—also contrast strongly with the already familiar

[110] Brackett, xi-xii

[111] The original sources of many of the quotations listed in **Fig. 20** were uncovered by Stephen Drury, who was generous enough to point some of them out to me. This is by no means a complete list, but even so, there is no way I could ever have uncovered as many as he has over the years.

Fig. 20. Measures 45-94 of *Carny*.

m. 45-47:
Limping 2nds in the treble and blues in the bass

m. 48:
Fortissimo interruption followed by soft, hurdy-gurdy circus music

m. 49:
Pianissimo chromatic flourish

m. 50:
"Messed up Mozart?"

m. 51:
"Punchy" jazz chords

m. 52-53:
Quotation from *Piano* (1977) by Morton Feldman

m. 54-55:
12-tone row in treble (possibly by Anton Webern) and blues in bass

m. 56-57:
Flourish of icy waves

m. 58:
Possible quotation of music from the Baroque era followed by a bombastic interruption

m. 59:
Boogie

m. 60:
Falling scale

m. 61-62:
Quotation from *Piano Fantasy* (1957) by Aaron Copland

m. 63:
Possible quotation of a late 19th-century Romantic work

m. 64:
Jazzy chords

m. 65:
Swing

m. 66:
Possible parody of Charles Ives's music

m. 67-79:
"Mozart" vs. "Elliott Carter"

m. 80-81:
Quotation from Sonata No. 12 in A-flat Major, op. 26 (III) by Beethoven

m. 82:
Modified Charlie Parker lick

m. 83:
Rising scale

m. 84:
Probable quotation (possibly from Chopin or Mozart)

m. 85-86:
Quotation from *Night Fantasies* (1980) by Elliott Carter

m. 87:
Quotation from the opening bar of *Carny*

m. 88:
A cat walking on keys

m. 89:
Chopin's Etude, op. 25 no. 9 (m. 1-2 backwards)

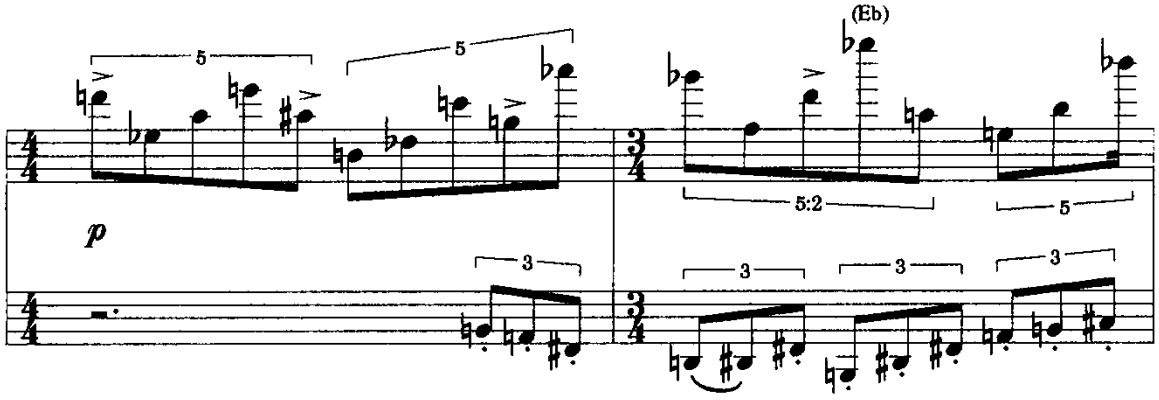
m. 90:
Quotation from *Little Rootie Tootie* by Thelonious Monk

m. 91:
Chopin's op. 25 no. 9 (m. 2)

m. 92-94:
"Iannis Xenakis" vs. Chopin's op. 25 no. 9 (m. 13-15)

blues line. A remarkably similar blues line had just been used seven bars earlier (m. 46-47), and its sound still lingers in the ear by the time m. 54 appears. This creates a contrast of warm and familiar vs. foreign and "new." These characters are not violent towards one another but merely come from separate worlds—coexisting for a brief time in Zorn's strange universe and then vanishing as quickly as they came. The point of the interaction seems clear: to view both of these vastly different types of music from new and

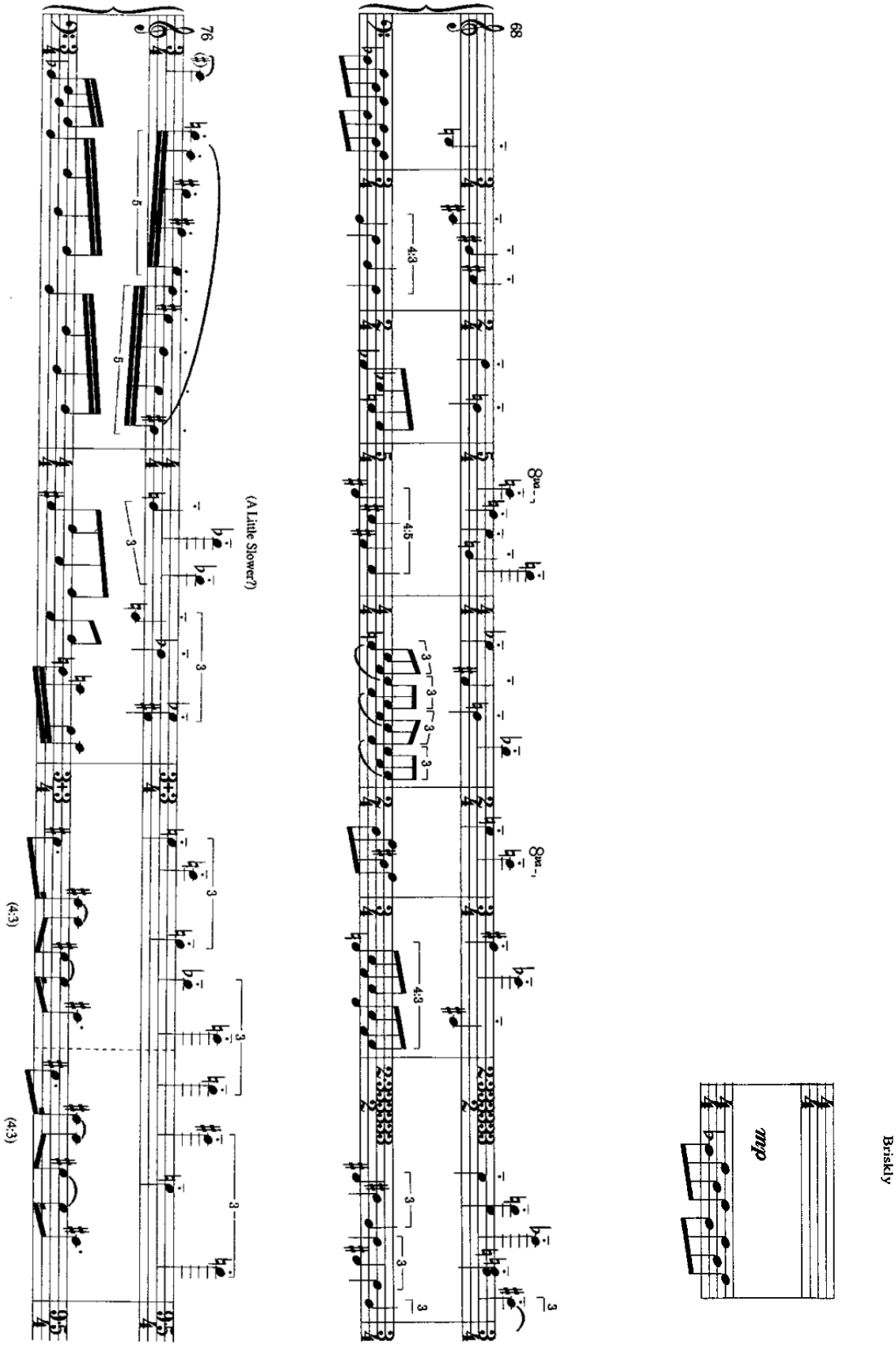
Fig. 21. Measures 54-55 of *Carny*.

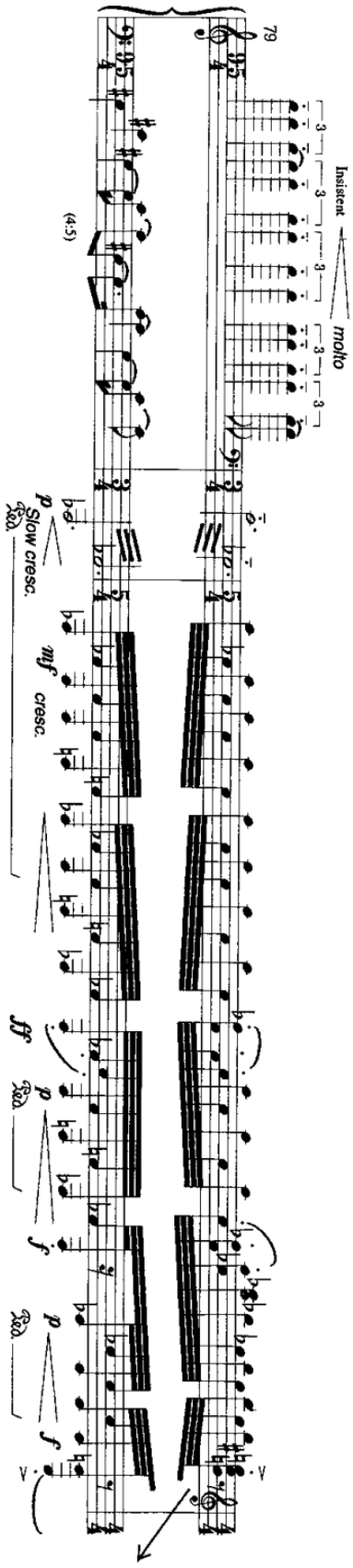


enlightening angles. The blues seems to soften the 12-tone music's edges by wrapping it in its warmth, and the 12-tone music somehow brings a sense of rigidity to a notoriously free and emotional genre—all simultaneously. Combining the two in this way thus creates something entirely new, something entirely Zorn's. The 12-tone row loses its serialist feel, and the blues line ceases to be blues. They instead become one—a new entity latent with questions and possible narrative commentary.

Another great pairing of dissimilar musics occurs in measures 67-79 **(see Fig. 22)**. As Drury points out in his article, these particular measures pit the style of Mozart against

Fig. 22. Measures 67-79 of *Carny*.




79
(4:5)
Insistent
molto
p
Slow cresc.
mf
cresc.
ff
p
f
p
f

that of Elliott Carter.[112] Unlike the last pairing, however, this encounter is not quite so peaceful, as it develops into something of a musical joust. Mozart's "character" is represented by Alberti bass figures, and atonal pointillism signifies Carter. Bar 67 begins with "Mozart" minding his own business in B-flat major. "Carter" arrives on the last beat of m. 68 on a B-natural, catching Mozart off guard and destabilizing his key of B-flat with a minor 2nd. In an initial attempt to coexist peacefully, Mozart adjusts to Carter's B-natural, treating it as the mediant of G, and he moves to G major (m. 68). Carter seems to want none of this, and right as Mozart changes keys, he moves as well with a short series of major 2nds. Carter's unexpected recklessness completely throws Mozart off track and into an all-out tonal and rhythmic identity crisis. Carter bullies Mozart for eight full measures this way, with his precise, staccato quarter notes: a constant barrage of random, unfriendly jabs. While Carter's rhythmic precision is unwavering, Mozart can't seem to catch on to the fluctuating meters, which change every measure. Sometimes he guesses right, and other times his pulse is way off. His sense of tonality and key are even further off base, and throughout these twelve measures, he changes key twelve times—moving from B-flat to G, then A-flat, F-sharp, C, D, F, B, B-flat, A, F, and finally, C-sharp. Even his sense of inversion becomes confused, as his B major chord is in 2nd inversion, and his A major and C-sharp major chords are in first inversion. On the ninth measure of this encounter, however (m. 76), Mozart stumbles upon his home key of B-flat again with a stable rhythmic pulse. Carter—apparently not expecting Mozart to put up a fight—becomes flustered and loses his own rhythmic precision (his quarters become quicker triplets in m. 77). Mozart further asserts himself in m. 78 with his strongest rhythmic

[112] Drury, 200

pulse yet (though still in the odd key of C-sharp major), and Zorn even splits this bar with a dotted line to signify Mozart's growing metric strength. The conflict reaches a standoff in m. 79, as Mozart remains strong and stubborn in C-sharp while Carter insistently repeats his high C jabs. This clash of resolute minor 2^{nds} climaxes at the end of a *molto crescendo*, at which point it breaks off abruptly and a victor finally emerges from the fray: Beethoven. Yes, the conflict is broken up by a quotation of none other than the third movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, op. 26, which is a funeral march.

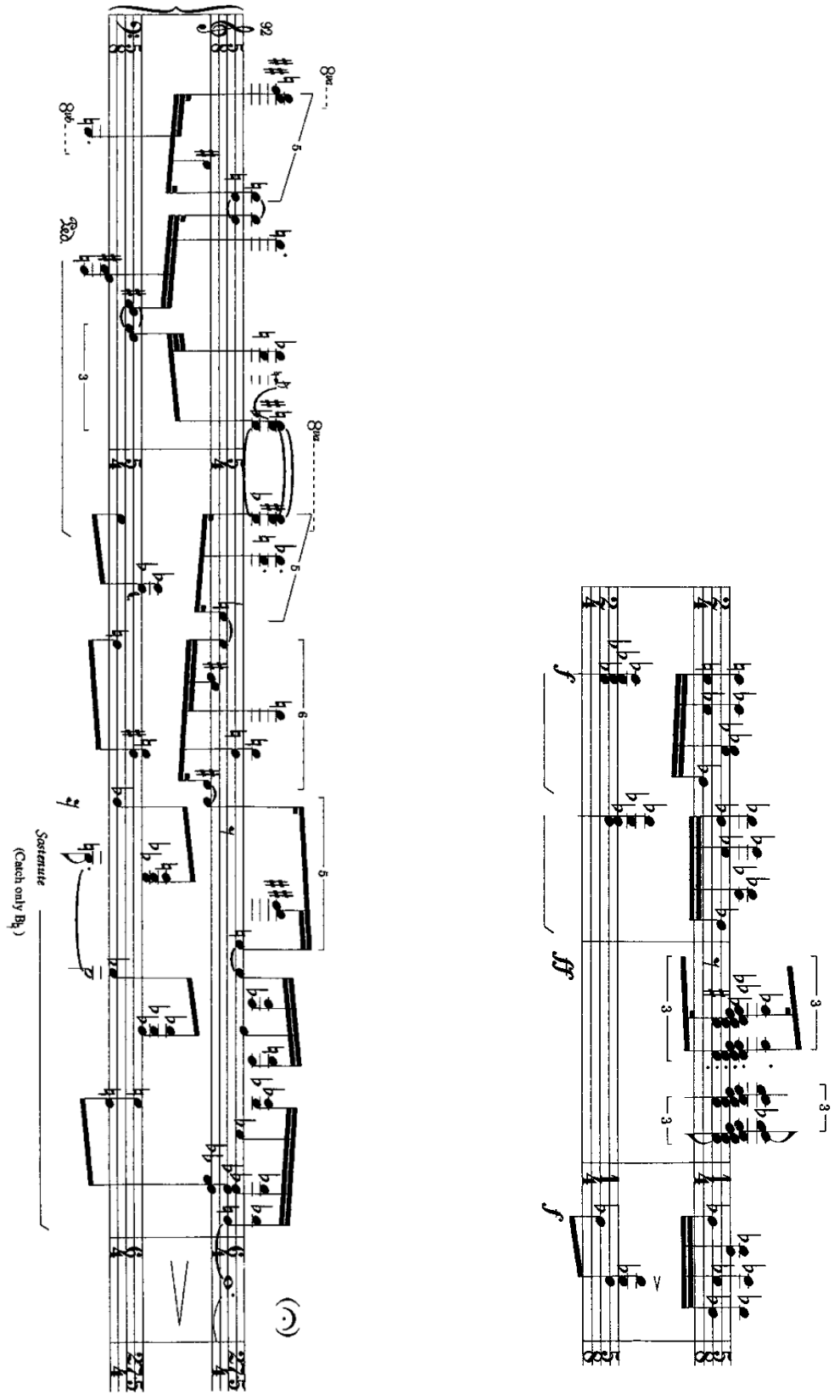
Zorn's quotation of Beethoven's *Funeral March* Sonata—with its implications of mutually assured destruction—is most likely tongue-in-cheek, but the meaningful undertones implicit in such comedy are hard to dismiss. Are these two musical worlds really so conflicting? Without something of a musical reconciliation, is their mutual destruction really assured? Is Zorn attempting to make such a reconciliation with *Carny*? It becomes futile to attempt to answer such questions, because Zorn is rarely interested in giving us answers. His concern is merely in asking probing questions and then letting listeners make their own deductions. Good questions are often so much more stimulating than answers.

My third example of Zorn's use of quotation (or "in the style of") comes from measures 89-94. These measures contain an encounter that turns out to be less of a musical battle and more of an individual struggle for survival and relevance, which does not seem quite as tongue-in-cheek as the previous confrontation. The "character" trying to stay relevant in this particular case is Chopin. These measures begin with a quotation from bars 1 and 2 of Chopin's Etude, op. 25 no. 9. The original source is completely

unrecognizable to the ear, however, as Zorn quotes it in reverse and blocks the left-hand figures into single chords **(see Fig. 23)**. After "Chopin"'s utter failure to make his presence known, he is pushed out of the way by a quotation (though not an exact one, as the rhythm now contains a hint of ragtime) of the incessant chords that appear throughout Thelonious Monk's *Little Rooty Tooty* (m. 90). A bar later, Chopin makes a second attempt to enter with the same passage of op. 25 no. 9, and this time he manages to be quoted in the right direction. It is still to no avail, though, as he is cut off after only four sixteenth notes (rather than the eight he was allowed two measures prior). While this second entrance is a little bit less difficult to identify than the previous one, it still goes by so quickly that the ear does not easily pick up its source. The music that overtakes Chopin this time around seems to be in the style of Xenakis, and it lasts for a bar until Chopin makes his third and final attempt at making his presence known (m. 93). This third quotation is derived from m. 13 of the same etude, but it is only the left hand that manages to speak here while the right hand continues to remain jumbled with "Xenakis." Gradually the "Xenakis" begins to morph into bars 14-15 of the Chopin, until Chopin's presence at last becomes undeniable in the last eight sixteenth notes of m. 93. Right as it finally manages to shine through, however, the quotation lands on a B-natural that does not belong to op. 25 no. 9. This B-natural freezes the etude in its tracks, and it holds there until the sound of op. 25 no. 9 disappears from the ear all together.

Again, Zorn's voice seems to be offering underlying commentary here, and while it is not always entirely clear what that commentary entails, there appears to be a thread running through the three examples I have highlighted. All three contain multiple styles of music that have been thrown into a state of crisis or flux by unexpected confrontations

Fig. 23. Measures 89-94 of *Carny*.



with music that is foreign to the respective worlds of each. At the very least, these confrontations offer listeners new perspectives on music they thought they already knew and understood. Moving beyond the very least, however, Zorn has left room for enormously latent questions and statements—made through these confrontations—that require individual interpretation by each listener:

> I cemented the idea of creating "nodes" that can be interpreted in a myriad of ways; each person creates their own narrative. . . . I think. . .of creating little prisms. When my single creative vision passes through it, it separates into all the possible colors of the spectrum. It's broken up into shards. There are many interpretations, and all of them are valid.[113]

Before I close this partial analysis of *Carny*, I would like to end with one final clarification. The three examples discussed above required some degree of detailed analysis in order to be fully appreciated. However, the heart of *Carny* lies not under the microscope alone, but in the moment—the present, so to speak. Brackett even suggests that maybe "the best way to *talk* about Zorn's music is to simply play the music and not say anything at all."[114] A true analysis of the work, therefore, can only be accomplished by a combination of the mind *and* the ear. As the ear experiences the piece in its entirety, the aural analysis changes each time for each listener (in this way, it is very much like Zorn's game pieces). As the mind analyzes and studies the score, the implications of the ear's analysis begin to take on new life. Words, therefore, cannot substitute for an analysis through experience, just as the ear alone cannot begin to grasp the complexities and inner workings of the piece. Both approaches are equally essential. While I have done my best in spite of the analytical challenges posed by *Carny*'s call for a postmodern approach to analysis, it is not a battle one should ever expect to win on paper alone. In the

[113] Service.
[114] Brackett, xii

end, the "new game of analysis," (as Zorn, Drury, and Service put it) turns out to be one unbound by quotation identification, narrative walk-throughs, structural maps, or material graphs. Instead, it is one that requires a postmodern openness to all possible analyses and individual interpretations—one that begs to be encountered in the moment *and* on paper. Therefore, I make a plea to readers to more fully complete my partial analysis of this great work by experiencing it with their own ears. A piece this fun is not likely to disappoint.

Carny and Stalling

At this point in my study on Carl Stalling, the parallels between *Carny* and Stalling's music—and my classification of Stalling as a pioneer of 20th-century postmodern art—should be completely apparent, but for good measure, I will briefly point to a few of the fundamentals that substantiate this assertion. To avoid redundancy, I will refrain from employing the mode of analysis that I used on Stalling's music in the previous chapter, and I will instead discuss *Carny* alongside a list of cues for Stalling's *The Old Grey Hare* (1944).

This short begins with Elmer Fudd crying over the fact that he "simply can't seem to catch that ooollld wabbit." Elmer's sobs are interrupted by the voice of God, who tells him that if he keeps trying, he may finally get Bugs one day. In order to better prove this, God takes Elmer "faaaarrr into the future"—to the year "2000 A.D."—so he can find out whether or not he outsmarts Bugs in the end. The rest of the short either occurs far in the future, where Elmer and Bugs are still going after each other as octogenarians, or—as the

two reminisce about their childhoods—deep in the past, where the chase occurs in diapers.

The score for this particular short is very similar in construct to that of *Carny*. The quotations, the jump-cuts, the commentary below the surface, the postmodern lack of musical prejudice—so much of it is found here. To demonstrate this, I have made a map of the short **(see Fig. 24)** that is similar in nature to the one I created for measures 45-94 of *Carny*.

While Stalling and Zorn clearly have a great deal in common, the point of this juxtaposition of *Carny* and *The Old Grey Hare* is not to prove that they are, in essence, carbon copies of one another. That is simply not true. Zorn's music is substantially more complex than Stalling's—as is often the case when comparing pioneers with the generations they inspired—and even the musical elements they share in common prove to be quite different when taking into account the methods in which they are employed. Zorn takes what he learned from Stalling and amplifies it multiple times over. Where Stalling quotes, Zorn layers quotations simultaneously. Where Stalling jumps from style to style in mere measures, Zorn makes the same jumps after a few notes. Where Stalling hides comedic commentary under the surface, Zorn leaves latent questions. Where Stalling incorporates multiple styles and genres of music into the same score, Zorn doubles and triples that number. What Zorn has essentially done, though, is to offer an undeniably strong case for the worth of Stalling's music, and he has done it by taking the techniques that Stalling honed throughout his career and using them to write great concert music. Hence, if Zorn's music is deserving of respect (which it receives quite regularly

Fig. 24. Cues for *The Old Grey Hare*.

Song/Piece Title	Composer	On-screen Action
Old Gray Mare	Unknown	Played during the credits
Blues In The Night	Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer	Elmer crying
Les Préludes	Franz Liszt	Elmer talking with God
Original Music	Stalling	Going into the future
Powerhouse	Raymond Scott	Elmer is suddenly old
Original Music	Stalling	"Smellevision replaces television! Carl Stalling sez, 'It will never work!'"
Original Music	Stalling	Elmer discovers his new gun
Bugle Call: "Get ready, get ready, get ready"	N.A.	The chase is about to begin
Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet	Percy Wenrich and Stanley Murphy	Bugs's entrance
Original Music	Stalling	Bugs gets away; Bugs limping away; Bugs gets shot
Dear Little Boy Of Mine	Ernest R. Ball and J. Keirn Brennan	Bugs lies dying

Original Music	Stalling	Elmer realizes who Bugs is; Bugs escapes
Light Cavalry Overture	Franz von Suppe	The chase begins
Original Music	Stalling	"Time for babies to have afternoon nap"
"Rock-a-Bye Baby"	Unknown	Mid-chase nap
Light Cavalry Overture	Franz von Suppe	Naptime over; the chase resumes
Original Music	Stalling	Bugs runs into tree; Bugs blows tuba; Bugs runs away
In The Stirrups	John S. Zamecnik	Elmer speeds after Bugs in a baby carriage
"A B C D E F G"	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (via a French folk tune)	Cop-Bugs pulls Elmer over for speeding
Original Music	Stalling	Bugs pulls bonnet over Elmer's head; Bugs runs away
"A B C D E F G"	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (via a French folk tune)	Bugs comes back; Bugs kisses Elmer
Dear Little Boy Of Mine	Ernest R. Ball and J. Keirn Brennan	To the future again
Memories	Gustave Kahn and Egbert van Alstyne	Bugs and Elmer singing in each other's arms

"Träumeri"	Robert Schumann	Elmer crying Schumann's melody; Bugs digs his own grave
California Here I Come	Al Jolson, George "Buddy" DeSylva and Joseph Mayer	Bugs tricks Elmer into the grave
Original Music	Stalling	Elmer in grave alone; Bugs buries Elmer alive
Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet	Percy Wenrich and Stanley Murphy	Bugs leaves Elmer with a stick of dynamite
Boom!	Sound effect	Ending credits

from the serious world of the "classical establishment"[115]), then Stalling's cartoon music deserves similar respect—if for nothing more than the fact that his postmodern compositional techniques continue to be so incredibly latent with musical potential generations later.

A great number of the similarities between Stalling's and Zorn's music can be seen by comparing the two maps in **Figs. 20 and 24**, but the maps also underscore a few important ways in which their compositional styles differ from one another. For the sake of completing my analysis, I will conclude this chapter by briefly discussing a few of these divergences.

[115] Woolfe.

While I have mentioned that Zorn is not very interested in his audience playing a game of "name that tune," this style of analysis is much more suitable for Stalling. In fact, most of Stalling's comedic undertones derive from this type of quotation. Take a moment to examine the titles of the music quoted in *The Old Grey Hare* and how they relate to the on-screen, visual narrative of the short. There is almost always some clever play on words working within Stalling's quotations that reflects his sarcastic sense of humor. While this type of comedy can be found in Zorn's music (I point to the quotation of Beethoven's *Funeral March* Sonata in *Carny*), this is not usually the motive behind his use of quotation. Certain juxtapositions in Zorn's music can be amusing for a number of reasons, but it is usually the interactions between contrasting musics—rather than the sources of the quotations themselves—that initiate the comedy. That being said, the lack of prejudice found in the musical sources from which Zorn chooses to quote clearly seems to be related to Stalling's practices.

The ways both composers turn pre-existing music into "new" music, while similar, also diverge in some key respects. Stalling does this by changing the tempos, accompaniment textures, tonalities, rhythms, and overall feeling of his quoted sources in order to better suit his narrative goals. For example, if two characters happen to be chasing each other in slow motion, Stalling might choose to quote the iconic chase music from Rossini's *William Tell Overture* in a lilting adagio to match the on-screen action (as he does at the end of *Water, Water Every Hare*, 1952). Zorn, in a related but more extreme way, changes and adapts direct, note-for-note quotations by overlaying them with other material (quoted or otherwise), moving in and out of them incredibly quickly,

or by myriad other techniques (as can be seen from the backwards Chopin quotation in m. 89 of *Carny*).

As for the narrative undertones found in Stalling's music, these also differ from Zorn's to varying degrees. As discussed in Chapter 4, Stalling comes from a more burlesque tradition in his use of pre-existing musical material, one that is often connected in some way to sarcastic or ironic lyrics and titles in order to a achieve a comedic subtext. Zorn's commentary in *Carny*, as has been noted, exists less for the purpose of creating ironic dual meanings and more for the implications found within the juxtaposed sounds themselves.

Finally, Stalling's jump-cuts should be seen as an inspiration for Zorn's block structures. The music being jumped to and from by each of these two composers often differs vastly from that of the other, but extreme contrast and change are of the utmost importance to both men. In reference to the block structures found in Zorn's collage pieces, Kolek notes that "'Speedfreaks' can illuminate our understanding of the relationship of cartoon music to Zorn's pieces."[116] This illumination shines all the brighter when we encounter the sounds of *Carny* head on.

> Brophy:
>
> Have you found with your music that it is dealing with a "cartoony" sensibility? By that I don't mean a kitsch, campy, nostalgic sensibility, but the actual structure and density and form of cartoons?
>
> Zorn:
>
> This is another interesting point—the difference between appreciating kitsch and appreciating art. I'm very serious about my approach to cartoon music, about my own music. . . . I can only be who I am, and do what I do. It's strange to be so serious about something like cartoons.[117]

[116] Kolek, 32
[117] Goldmark and Taylor, 266

Conclusion

In writing this paper, I have had two explicit motives in mind throughout: 1) to bring attention to a composer whose work is unjustly under-appreciated and undervalued, and 2) to help the reader understand the value of Stalling's music by viewing it in a historical context. This paper by no means covers all available angles for scholars wishing to take up the Stalling torch (e.g., the parallels between Stalling's mickey-mousing and tone painting throughout music history; the similarities and differences between Stalling and Scott Bradley—Stalling's enormously talented counterpart over at MGM, who was composing contemporaneously—or maybe even a deeper look into correlations between the artistic impetuses of Stalling and Ives), but I found the topics covered here to be the best possible path to my specific goals.

In an attempt to avoid having these goals brushed aside by those quick to pre-judge Stalling, I have felt an obligation to assess his music with language that at times felt a bit too serious and stodgy for music this outlandish—language generally considered more appropriate for an academic study. In doing so, I have risked stripping some of the fun and humor out of a body of music that is so brilliantly charged with these qualities. In short, I have risked making Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Porky Pig boring, which to Warner Bros.'s credit, is not easily accomplished. This is a risk that I have decided I am willing to take, however, and I do so with the hope of breaking down some of the stereotypes so commonly associated with cartoon music. There is some fairness to these stereotypes as applied to much of the music of this genre—particularly vis-a-vis the vast

majority of the music written for cartoons created for television between the 1960s and today—but as for Carl Stalling, his music belongs in an entirely different conversation.

My purpose in writing a paper on Stalling's cartoon music—as it relates to music and tradition that both pre-date and follow it—is in nowise a simple attempt at making it appear to be something it is not. I fully understand that Stalling was composing for an intentionally silly medium and that he had no real desire or expectation for his music to be written about and explored in this way. In fact, were he alive today, he may even have had a good laugh out of this paper's treatment of his work. That said, zaniness and absurdity do not, on their face, disqualify something from being historically significant, currently relevant, or of high artistic value—particularly in our postmodern world. My choice to discuss Stalling alongside Schumann, Ives, and Zorn, was made by carefully examining Stalling's body of work, isolating what makes it *his*, and then branching out in both directions to discover the historical precedent for his compositional techniques and the ways that his notated employment of those techniques affected music being written decades later. I believe Schumann and Zorn to be the best models—pre- and post-Stalling respectively—for an examination of Stalling's body of work in historical context, and I believe such an examination to be necessary if one hopes to gain a full appreciation of what his music represents more broadly in music history.

As previously mentioned, Goldmark's sources are still the absolute cornerstones of available Stalling material, and this paper has merely attempted to add to his groundbreaking work. It is my hope that the future of music history will carve out a well-deserved place for Carl Stalling. Music this imaginative certainly calls for further examination.

As a final thought, I entreat the reader to watch these classic cartoons, to keep them from being forgotten. Most of these works of art were not intended for children alone, as many of the made-for-television shorts are today. These comedies are richly laden with quality craftsmanship in every aspect of their production, and they are capable of providing more than a few laughs. Because of the care and money these studios put into their animation departments, composers like Carl Stalling were given nearly free reign to create an original musical sound that will forever be associated with this golden age of Hollywood cartoons. It is a sound that lives in the subconscious of every person who has had the good fortune of being exposed to Stalling's world of laughter and color, of imagination and freedom, of slapstick and the painful sounds of so many anvil mishaps. This world of Carl Stalling's is Looney, and Merrie, and Silly, but above all else, it is a world of fearless ingenuity and abounding joy.

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